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MARXISM &

ALIENATION

A SYMPOSIUM

On some of the most deeply felt issues of the day: the nature, source and challenge of alienation.

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The American Institute for Marxist Studies (AIMS) is a non-profit educational, research and bibliographical institute. Its purposes are to encourage Marxist and radical scholarship in the United States and to help bring Marxist thought into the forum of reasonable debate to produce a meaningful dialogue among Marxist and non-Marxist scholars and writers. Its policy is to avoid sectarian and dogmatic thinking. It engages in no political activity and takes no stand on political questions. It grinds no axe for any group, party, sect, organization.

To these ends it invites the support and participation of all scholars and public-spirited individuals.

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Edited by HERBERT APTHEKER

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INTRODUCTION

by The Editor

The original Prospectus of The American Institute for Marxist Studies, published in March, 1964, made clear that, "In its main purpose—helping to produce a confrontation with the Marxist outlook—the Institute will seek to bring this outlook into all debate and discourse."

One of the forms used by AIMS for this purpose has been that of the symposium, including week-long discussions of which two have been held as of the summer of 1965. The first of these searching dialogues was devoted to an examination of the phenomenon of alienation; the second had as its theme, "Marxism and Religion."

The volume now before the reader consists of the Papers presented originally in the summer of 1964, at the World Fellowship Camp in Conway, New Hampshire, plus two additional contributions from European scholars and a bibliographical chapter.

In keeping with the catholic nature and intent of AIMS, the papers in this volume not only deal with different areas of life but also present varying emphases and points of views. All, however, concentrate upon the nature and meaning of alienation in the modern world and all, in varying degree, find the Marxian approach especially illuminating.

Professor LeRoy presents a careful effort at precise definition of alienation, opinions as to what it is and what it is not and views as to its actual source; in the course of doing this he takes issue with those who see no significant distinction in the thinking of the young and the mature Marx.

The Editor analyses manifestations of alienation in the American social order, comments on counter-tendencies and offers suggestions as to the possibility of overcoming the sense of alienation within contemporary United States.

Mr. Sidney Finkelstein—whose remarkable book, *Existentialism*

and Alienation in American Literature, has just been published by International Publishers (N. Y.) —seeks to illustrate the impact of alienation not only on the content but also on the form of much of contemporary U.S. literature; he offers views, too, on the total impact of alienation upon literature as such.

Professor Howard D. Langford, taking much of contemporary non-socialist world literature as his province, concentrates upon the relationship between the point of vision of that literature and its coherence, reality, truthfulness; he examines the idea that insofar as the point of vision and the actuality of that perceived diverge one has an important source and reflection of alienation.

Professor Howard L. Parsons takes up frontally the purpose of dialogue—which is central to the AIMS concept—and enters into such a dialogue with Jean-Paul Sartre, certainly one of the seminal minds of the present epoch. In doing this, Professor Parsons illuminates not only Sartre's work but also the nature of existentialism, its differing forms, its development, and its challenge to Marxism—and Marxism's challenge to it.

Our two European contributors bring to the book not only the vision of non-Americans, but also the vision of scholars living and working within socialist societies. Professor Almasi, working in such a society that is still quite young, sees the persistence of alienation within it, though in forms that differ markedly from those it presents in capitalist societies. In this connection, he emphasizes the significance of the division of labor and of routine; many readers will find especially interesting his analysis of the fetishism of money, of problems of Veblen's conspicuous consumption, and of what we Americans call "connections," within the context of the conscious effort to create a fully human social order.

Professor Oiserman, of the Soviet Union, examines the increased interest in alienation and seeks to account for this. He then moves to an effort to substantiate his central thesis: that alienation is not inherent in "human nature" but is rather, socially derived and therefore may be socially extirpated.

We hope readers will agree that the resulting book is one that constitutes an important addition to the bibliography that closes this effort.

September, 1965

MARXISM AND ALIENATION

I.

THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION: AN ATTEMPT AT A DEFINITION*

Gaylord C. LeRoy

The difficulty with the concept of alienation is that it is *too* useful—it explains, in a way, too much. (A strange complaint!) If it means that our human feelings and responses have been in some way estranged from us, alienated from us, then it does seem to apply to many typical maladies of our times.

When for example we read of the thirty-eight people who looked on as a young woman was stabbed to death in three separate attacks and none of whom even called the police, the response that comes at once to mind is that these people were somehow alienated from themselves, they were not acting as you expect people to act, the normal human impulses appeared to have been inoperative. Then there is the crowd watching the young man trying to make up his mind to jump from the fourteenth floor. There have been at least two examples recently where the crowd that gathered on such an occasion began after a time to yell in unison, "Jump, jump, jump." Reading about this, one felt that these people were not acting like human beings either. Were they not also alienated from themselves? Or consider our helplessness in the face of the social and political events of our time. We do not act as if attached to these events, or really involved in them; we stand aside in a kind of daze. And then there is our helplessness in regard to the threat of nuclear catastrophe. A few people do respond to this threat, they try to do something, but most of us have withdrawn and become spectators, not really connected with what is going on. Alienation again?

A glance at the introduction to the paperback *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society*[1] will show how easy it is to use the

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term to explain anything and everything. Among the evidences of alienation in our time, the editors mention the "lives of quiet desperation," senseless acts of violence by juveniles, the "stupefied audiences of the mass media," the people who reject the values of our culture but have no alternative, escapists, retreatists, nihilists, desperate people who would solve our problems by blowing up the planet. The key concept for all these groups, according to the editors, Eric and Mary Josephson, is alienation.

Among the psycho-social disorders for which the term alienation is used, they mention anxiety states, depersonalization, the sense of rootlessness, of powerlessness, of meaninglessness. Among the social groups who have been described as especially alienated, they name women, industrial workers, white-collar workers, migrant workers, artists, suicides, mentally disturbed people, addicts, the aged, the young generation as a whole, juvenile delinquents, voters, non-voters, consumers, the audiences of the mass media, sex deviants, victims of prejudice and discrimination, the prejudiced and the discriminators. Soon you begin to see that a term that explains so much actually explains very little. This is precisely the problem we confront with alienation. The way to establish a measure of precision in our thinking about the subject is to look at the history of the term.

The basic text here is the early manuscripts of Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Marx took over a term used by Hegel and Feuerbach and redefined it. Writing specifically about alienation in bourgeois society, he traces the condition to the nature of the work process, to the way, under the conditions of private ownership, work ceases to be the expression of the creative powers of the worker; he traces it also (and this is a more subtle and more astonishing perception) to the way the objects man creates acquire an independent power and rule over him. He shows how man is impoverished in a society where labor "is *external* to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being," where in his work man "does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind." Labor "is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a *means* to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical compulsion

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exists, labor is shunned like the plague."[2]

A new English translation of the early manuscripts has recently been issued with an introduction by Dirk J. Struik.[3] Selsam and Martel make use of the manuscripts in the appendix dealing with the formative period of Marx's thought in their *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*. Erich Fromm has issued a selection from the manuscripts in *Marx's Concept of Man*, and in the introduction to this book he offers an interpretation of Marx's view of alienation.[4] The most thorough analysis of these documents appears in the second volume of *The Life and Works of Marx and Engels* by Auguste Cornu, a book that has not yet appeared in English.[5] What is especially valuable in Cornu is the analysis he gives of the stage Marx had reached at this period of his life (his middle twenties) in the working out of the theory that later came to be known as Marxism. If we follow Cornu, we will find that we can learn much both from the profound and still valid insights embodied in the manuscripts and also from the particular ways in which Marx himself was later to go beyond the stage of theoretical development he had reached at this time.

It would be hard to put too much emphasis on the fact that Marx traces all forms of alienation to the work process. The essential reality of a non-alienated person, he tells us, is that he is able to express his human powers in his work. The essential reality of the alienated person is that he is not able to do this, because the work he performs is a kind of enslavement. As a consequence he becomes passive and apathetic. His human powers become estranged from him.

Who has not for himself found corroboration for this discovery concerning the importance of work? We all know, for example, how deadening work can be when forced upon us and how exciting and what a source of pleasure it can be when we have chosen it for ourselves. Compare the man employed by a construction company with one who builds his own house. The whole do-it-yourself fad was based in part on this insight concerning work. Again, most of us have seen the change that takes place in a man's character when for the first time he begins to take hold of work he believes in, work that requires the best he has to give to it. And can anyone doubt, to take another example, that the whole problem of juvenile de-

linquency would quickly solve itself if serious, creative, meaningful, challenging work could be made available to the potential delinquents?

In nineteenth-century England, Ruskin found his way to a correct understanding of the importance of labor; it is a perception that gives weight and validity to much of his writing. William Morris took over this perception from Ruskin and put it at the center of his thinking. Many who have not been directly influenced by Marx have learned from this other tradition of which Ruskin and Morris are representatives about the supreme importance of a man's relationship to his labor. People who work with the arts, one observes, are usually well informed about this also. For the activity of the artist, as Schiller said, is the very type of free labor, labor that releases the powers of the creator. (Hence the therapeutic value of artistic work.) Since alienation comes about because something has gone wrong in the sphere of work, it follows that freedom from alienation will require fundamental transformations in this area.

But now we must be more specific. Exactly what is it in the work process that alienates? A common view is that it is work under the conditions of industrialism—the assembly line (Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times"), dehumanized machine labor. There appears to be no question about it, this is not the view that Marx advanced in the manuscripts. The view represents a quiet revisionism of Marxist theory. Its chief attraction, like that of other forms of revisionism, is that it accommodates the theory to the status quo. For if the trouble lies in industrialism—well, the socialist societies are industrialized also, so the present economic order in the capitalist countries is in no way called in question. Perhaps another reason for concluding that the trouble lies in the conditions of a technological age, is that it follows then that nothing can be done about the problem, for no one would seriously consider going back to a pre-industrialized economy. In the study of neurosis we know how ready the neurotic is to believe that nothing can be done about his condition; he wants to hang on to the conviction that the outlook is hopeless. May there not be some similar temptation here—a temptation, that is, to adopt a philosophy that says that no possible action makes sense, a philosophy that therefore requires nothing of us?

Yet we must concede that this is an extremely difficult problem, so difficult that people who have no wish to defend the existing

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order may well find themselves persuaded that alienation does have its source in technology. In initiating a discussion in *Marxism To-day* on the subject of "Alienation Under Socialism" Judith Cohen states the problem well:

> One can understand only too well alienation in the capital-ist world, but it is difficult to grasp how alienation can be completely overcome in an advanced industrial society, even when that society is socialist. Merely changing the relations of production cannot really alter the effect of automation. Although the society is humanized the productive techniques surely remain as impersonal and as intimidating as under capitalism. . . . Is fitting nuts and bolts in a Soviet factory any less soul destroying than in a Western factory? Surely the fact that the worker is not being exploited under socialism does not alter the other tyrannies under which he necessarily labors in any modern factory.[6]

The view Marx advances in the manuscripts is unambiguous. The roots of alienation, he says, lie not in industrialism but in private ownership of the means of production. Private ownership brings about the condition of alienation, first, because work under these conditions serves neither the interest of the worker (except as a means of earning his wage) nor the interest of a society in which the worker feels that he has a stake; it serves merely the profit of the owner. Work under these conditions ceases to be a means through which the worker expresses his human or creative powers; it becomes enslaved labor. Second, under these conditions the worker falls victim to forces that he can neither control nor even understand. Marx brilliantly describes how the objects man pro-duces become an independent power ruling over him. They con-front him "as *something alien,* as a *power independent* of the producer. . . . The worker is related to the product of his labor as to an alien object. . . . The more the worker spends himself, the more powerful the alien objective world becomes which he creates over against himself, the poorer he himself—his inner world—be-comes, the less belongs to him as his own. It is the same in religion. The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object; but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object. Hence, the greater this activity, the greater is the worker's lack of objects. Whatever the product

of his labor is, he is not. Therefore the greater this product, the less is he himself. The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him; it means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien."[7]

Alienation comes about, in a word, because the objects man has created come to rule him in the development of the capitalist market. He ceases to have the feeling of creating for use and is ignorant of the reasons for the rise and fall of demand for the products of his labor. "The laborer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the laborer."[8]

It is a mistake to think that the craftsman of an earlier age, the independent shoemaker for example, is the very type of the non-alienated person merely because he lived before the age of the great dehumanizing factory. For in so far as the products he made became objects having an independent life of their own, became part of the market which he did not comprehend and could not control, there is a sense in which he might well have been alienated. Conversely, it is a mistake to think of the assembly-line worker as the very type of the alienated individual merely because he is a part of the apparatus of mass production. In a society which eradicated the two sources of alienation, private ownership of the means of production and the market which brings it about that the products of man's labor become alien objects exercising an independent power over him, the assembly-line worker would be on the road at least to emancipation from alienation.

The question is of the most vital importance because our analysis of the causes will determine our thinking about the remedy. If the trouble lay in technology, as we said, there would be no way out. But Marx does propound a solution to the problem. This solution, as everyone knows, is public ownership of the means of production —that is, socialism or (to use the term he actually employs in the manuscripts) communism—"*communism* as the positive transcendence of *private property* . . . and therefore as the real *appropriation of the human essence* by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a *social* (i.e., human) being. . . ."[9] Communist society, for Marx at this stage, is the indispensable prerequisite for the rehumanization of man. The

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view of the Marxist is that a solution to the problem of alienation can be found; what is required is social ownership and control of the means of production. Not that this would put an end to alienation at once; the view, rather, is that it constitutes the indispensable first step toward gradual emancipation from the condition of alienation.

In the early manuscripts, according to Cornu, Marx is crystallizing his philosophic materialism. The great interest of Cornu's analysis, as a matter of fact, is that he interprets the manuscripts as transitional documents and shows us how they reveal the thinking of Marx at the moment when he was finding himself, when he was freeing himself from the influence of his predecessors, Hegel and Feuerbach in particular. Cornu analyzes carefully the way Marx's thought differs from that of Feuerbach. One of the most important points is that Feuerbach was an inconsistent materialist. He was, in Marx's view, a materialist in most features of his philosophy but not in his understanding of history. Here his outlook was that of an idealist. And as a philosophic idealist he believed that alienation would be overcome through the thought process, through the influence of ideas or ethical striving. But Marx in the manuscripts is already formulating his more consistent philosophic materialism, and he sees that the way out will not be simply through the influence of ideas but through practical action, through the transformation of the concrete relationships of society.

The great temptation now is to revert to Feuerbach, to return to an inconsistent materialist, or plainly idealist, mode of thinking about alienation. This frequently takes the form of supposing that when we have understood the source of the ailment we will magically be cured. The tradition of philosophic idealism encourages us to think that the force of mind, regardless of the structure of society, can work miracles.

We confront here what is surely one of the central distortions of consciousness in present-day society. It was the typical crippling distortion in the social thought of many distinguished 19th-century thinkers.[10] It is a philosophic error most congenial to the academic mind. Since the university is concerned with ideas, almost all professors are exposed to the seductive charm of the belief that if you can only straighten out the way people *think*, you will solve the world's problems. How easy it is for all of us to over-rate the force

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of ideas and moral suasion and to under-rate the profound influence emanating from the institutional structure of society. The single most drastic transformation in *Weltanschauung* that Marxism requires is the shift from this mode of thinking to a materialism that recognizes how all forms of thought and behavior are subject to influences explicable in the last analysis only by reference to changes taking place in the forces and relations of production. Marx teaches us to understand that systems of ideas, codes of ethics and philosophies in the superstructure do not in the last analysis exert the decisive influence upon the institutional structure of society. On the contrary, this structure, which itself develops under the influence of the changing mode of production, ultimately determines the character of systems of ideas, codes of ethics, and philosophies.

No doubt there are other reasons why we are tempted to adopt the view that understanding alone, an activity of the mind, will magically liberate us from the condition of alienation. It's a safe view; it does not require us to do anything that will elicit growls from the watchdogs of privilege. I suggested earlier that the notion that the sources of alienation lie in technology rather than in private ownership attracts us in part because this view offers no hope and therefore requires no action. Perhaps we have an analogous attraction in the notion that understanding of the sources of alienation is a sufficient instrument of liberation. This also is a view that requires no action. We might also observe that this view accommodates itself to the comfortable moralizing approach to difficult questions; it is always more pleasant to preach than to act! However, we must also point out that it is easy to adopt this view because there is in fact something in it. Understanding will help. It is even a necessary precondition for practice. Since understanding is indispensable, we find it easy to take the next step and assume that it is all we need.

One of the weaknesses in Erich Fromm's discussion of alienation is that he so frequently adopts a moralizing approach to the problem. The peroration of the Josephsons' introduction to *Man Alone* provides another example. The Josephsons have explained what alienation is, so now they turn to the reader and urge that he disalienate himself. "Can we arrive at a sense of purpose and retain the freedom we value so highly and use so poorly? Or will we drift into a garrison state that will give us our marching orders?

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. . . Which shall we choose? The rest of the world may not wait long for us to decide." Surely the implication of language like this is that when we have understood the nature of alienation we can by some moral effort decide to disalienate ourselves.

If we are to follow Marx here, the important thing to insist upon is that the understanding of the nature and causes of alienation will not in itself be sufficient to liberate us; what will liberate us, on the other hand, is practice—practice directed toward the establishment of the kind of society in which men will in fact work for themselves and in which the necessary preconditions will accordingly be brought about for the development of the kind of labor that is an expression of the human capacities of the laborer.

Another conclusion may be drawn from the fact that the early manuscripts were transitional documents. Marx did not drop the concept of alienation but he did come to subordinate it, to make it a part of a larger and more complex system of ideas. It is retained in the theory of the fetishism of commodities in Marx's mature theory,[11] but whereas in the early manuscripts alienation has a central importance, the theory of fetishism functions in the later work as only a subordinate part of a bold, extensive, and complex apparatus of theory. Major features of this apparatus of theory are the conception of historical materialism, in which the mode of production is regarded as the generator of transformations in the whole structure of society, the key to historical change; the special discoveries concerning the nature of the capitalist economic system, the theory of surplus value, etc.; the role of class conflict and contradiction; the relationship between fundamental class realities and the phenomena of mental and artistic cultural life in the superstructure.

If you were attempting a Marxist account of our own time you would need to use the whole of this theory rather than emphasizing a single part of it. To explain phenomena that are frequently accounted for in terms of the single concept of alienation, you would need further to analyze the conflict between the two systems, capitalism and socialism, and the way this conflict has been exploited in order to develop a Cold-War mentality. In speaking of how we are to struggle forward, one would need to analyze the special role of the working class, the relationship between quantitative and qualitative change in social movement, and so on. Only an apparatus of theory as complex as this, I would suggest, will

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give us theoretical clarity about the nature of present-day reality.

* * *

All of which is theory. But as Americans we find it difficult to take seriously a theoretical analysis that differs markedly from what we see before our eyes. This pragmatic habit of mind, undoubtedly our foremost shortcoming as a people, is nevertheless a shortcoming that we have to live with, and the way to live with it at this moment is to talk not about theory (that dazzling apparatus of theory that has so greatly taken hold of the imagination and mind of man in our time), but to talk about how the thing is working out in practice. I will confine myself here to one or two remarks about relevant experience in the German Democratic Republic.

On one thing all informed observers are agreed—what is going on there is not only the building up of a socialist economy but the beginnings of a transformation in human nature. The two purposes are inseparable, they say, the purpose of building a powerful socialist economy, and the purpose of striving toward new developments in human nature. Ernst Fischer recently stated that the socialist countries should talk less about production figures and more about the great aims of humanism. The reply made by Kurt Krueger is that the two concerns must go together. It is only by means of the struggle to build up a powerful socialist economy that a new human nature can be brought into being. And this works the other way around also; it is only through the development of a new human nature that a socialist economy can in the last analysis be made to work.[12]

The grand dialectic of the change that is going on in the new socialist countries has been formulated by Reinhold Miller. In early society man was closely integrated with the community. Then with the development of a class society this close and responsible relationship to the community was destroyed, but as a compensating feature the isolated individual achieved certain important kinds of enrichment of the personality. Socialist society brings a negation of the condition of class conflict, but this involves at the same time a dialectical *Aufhebung* which will eventually bring into being a new type of personality, combining the human traits that flourish in a society not riven by contradiction (responsibility to the community, strengthening of human loyalties and

affections) and on the other hand the kind of differentiation and enrichment of the personality that has evolved in class society.[13]

Thus it is not to be expected that the individual in a socialist society will necessarily show his devotion to the community by preoccupying himself with communal activities; he may well be the sort of person who prefers to be much alone, who often withdraws into his own meditations or his own creative activities. The difference will be that in this kind of isolation or privacy he will consolidate his power to contribute to the social good.

The most exciting area in which the new perspectives for human nature are being worked out is literature. The great task of the writer in the socialist countries is to discover and portray a new image of man. At the two Bitterfeld conferences, writers have been urged to go to the working class, to associate themselves closely with the men building the new society, because only in that way can the writer get first-hand experience with a newly emerging human nature. In the second Bitterfeld conference, which was held in the Spring of 1964, writers were urged especially to associate themselves with men in positions of leadership, that is, with the most creative and best informed people in the new society, the master builders of socialism. Meanwhile, it becomes clear that the socialist writer is going to portray new kinds of conflict. He is no longer taking as his models people in direct conflict with the class enemy. What then will be the new conflicts in terms of which a new socialist man will forge his own nature? What conflicts will emerge in the struggle to build a new society? It is for the writers to discover these conflicts and thus at once to record and create a new image of man.[14]

Unquestionably one of the most significant changes taking place in human nature is the beginning of emancipation from alienation. The ideological spokesmen for the German Democratic Republic have recently formulated their views on this matter specifically, prompted to do so partly in order to refute charges made by Iring Fetscher and Ernst Fischer, both of whom contend that alienation persists in the socialist countries. Ernst Fischer, in a defense of Kafka, has advanced the view that there persists in the socialist countries a condition of alienation roughly comparable to what Kafka describes and that for this reason Kafka's writings are as applicable there as anywhere else. The East Germans reject this contention. There appears to be a certain disagreement as to the

speed with which emancipation from alienation may be expected to proceed, but there is no disagreement concerning the fact that movement in that direction is underway.

The relationship to work, they insist, is changing. In a real sense the workers in the GDR are in fact working for themselves. Legally they own the means of production. This does not immediately create the conditions of un-alienated labor that we see when a man builds his own house, but it does constitute a step in this direction.[15] While it is obvious that the chief concern is to organize work with maximum efficiency, to get the great industries constructed, the objective is not merely to develop the productivity of the laborer but also to bring about the humanization of the worker through the experience of cooperative labor. Satisfaction with one's work is one of the goals of socialism.

When a man works for himself, they assert, the quality of every feature of his work is transformed. The wage has a different function, for instance. Iring Fetscher has charged that the workers of the GDR are wage slaves in precisely the same sense as the wage slaves of capitalism, hence alienated in the same way. In answer, Hans Koch points out that the wage in fact ceases to be merely a compensation for work done and becomes also the emblem and measure of the degree to which the worker has contributed to the general welfare, of the degree to which he has succeeded in using his powers in the building up of socialism. Koch points out also that automation has a different function where the workers own the means of production. Under capitalism automation increases the alienation of the worker. We find the prospect appalling. Under socialism, however, automation is acclaimed, since it promises to contribute incalculably to social production and thus to make possible higher development of the powers of the worker, to provide increased leisure, and so on.[16]

Another point. While the roots of alienation in bourgeois society are to be located in the work process, other kinds of alienation follow, among these alienation in regard to social and political institutions. This is something we have intimate experience with in this country. Iring Fetscher has charged that this kind of alienation persists in the socialist countries. In reply, writers in the GDR concede that the state apparatus embodies a sufficient concentration of power so that the potential for alienation undoubtedly exists. But even in regard to this apparatus of state power, they remind

us that distinctions must be made. The bureaucracy of a socialist country is after all the instrument of the power of the working class, whereas the bureaucracy of a capitalist country is the instrument, in the Marxist view, of the domination of an alien ruling class. They add that the very consciousness of the danger of this kind of alienation will make it possible to take precautions against it. And then they point out also that a constant effort is being made to involve great numbers of people in the decision-making process. The extension of practical involvement in the structure of self-government will eventually be the best guarantee against social and political alienation.

Now to conclude. I suggested at the beginning that the term alienation is used loosely—it is used to refer to a whole book-full of psychological disorders. I then went on to an historical analysis in an effort to establish a degree of precision. In view of this historical survey, should we propose to limit the use of the term? Only a pedant, I think, would make such a proposal. Words acquire their own meanings; they take off and transform themselves in flight. The effort to confine a term like alienation to a meaning suggested by its origin is certain to be fruitless.

But the historical examination, it seems to me, suggests certain useful ways to think about the *condition* of alienation. In particular, it gives us the tools to avoid the sentimentality that surrounds the term in much of its current use. What is sentimental here is the tendency to delude yourself into thinking that this concept has somehow disclosed the secret of the age, while at the same time you feel no responsibility to act differently in view of your knowledge. To indulge an emotion without changing one's behavior in the way required by the conditions that give rise to this emotion—this is what I mean by sentimentality. And alienation is a term particularly likely to give rise to sentimentality of this kind.

In three important ways, our historical analysis should help us to resist this kind of sentimentality. First, we should not employ the term as a single key to contemporary reality. It must function as one component of a complex body of theory. To ascend to an apparatus of theory that measures up to the complexity of contemporary reality—this is the real task of the intellectual in our time. We must not permit the magic talisman of alienation to prevent

us from responding to this challenge. Second, we must keep reminding ourselves that the heart of the problem lies in man's relationship to his labor, and that we will not solve the' problem of alienation until we make changes in the structure of society that conditions a person's attitude toward his work and his ability to give expression to his creative powers in his work. Third, we must keep reminding ourselves at the same time that the understanding of the causes of alienation is not in itself going to liberate us from this condition, that the instrument of liberation will be practice devoted to the construction of the kind of society in which more wholesome relationships to work will prevail.

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II.

ALIENATION AND THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER

Herbert Aptheker

Brecht, in his poem, "Vanished Glory of New York, the Giant City," wrote of the American:

> *He journeys nowhere*
> *With incomparable speed!*

There, in six words—penned thirty-five years ago—the genius conveyed the frenetic, aimless and desperate quality in much of American life that today is a matter of widespread concern and comment. Writing of this scene in the leading Catholic lay weekly, *The Commonweal* (June 26, 1964), Richard M. Elman asked:

> Must it always be so—never quite coherent, perceived hermetically, a rushing about the ears, without obvious sequences, a garble of sounds, confusing us, leaving us direc-tionless, without any moral center, quite mortal, solitary, quite without any point of reference aside from our dissoci-ated selves?

The Cold-War years have witnessed a resurgence of religion, but where this has not reflected the seeking of status, it seems to have reflected the seeking of solace—again, in the face of an apparently broken, hostile and meaningless world. One of the most distin-guished Protestant theologians, Henry Pitney Van Dusen, in his *The Vindication of Liberal Theology* (N.Y., 1963, Scribner's), stated: "Theological revival has been matched by no corresponding resur-gence of morality. On the contrary, as theological interest has ad-vanced, moral health in America has steadily worsened." Within the churches themselves, wrote Paul Tournier (*The Christian Cen-tury*, June 17, 1964): ". . . we soon feel that nobody is really

interested in us as persons, that nobody will open himself to us in a very personal way." In brief, says that leading Protestant journal, in an editorial (May 27, 1964), it is "moral nihilism which now rides triumphant over all isms in American culture."

Not unexpectedly then, the evidences of decay lie all about us. Marya Mannes, in her well-titled assault, *But Will It Sell?* (N.Y., 1964, Lippincott), expresses horror over the growth of savagery in the United States; in particular, she notes: ". . . the gun has become an extension of the American hand."

A man teetering at the edge of eternity on a tenth-floor ledge, in New York City, contemplating suicide, shortly attracts five hundred spectators upon the street below, with the vast majority eagerly calling upon him to jump; another similarly preoccupied atop the Brooklyn Bridge attracts a large number of vocal sadists; still another, with the same idea, atop a hotel-roof ledge in up-State New York, receives similar "encouragement." (These are all described by Irving Spiegel in the *N.Y. Times,* June 8, 1964.)

The rise in the crime rate is well known; notable in that connection is the particularly steep increase in the rate of violent, especially grossly violent, crimes. The incidence of "savagery", to use Miss Mannes' word, that this reflects is obvious; related is the apathy or unconcern frequently manifested in its presence. Blaming these phenomena simply on "bigness" and urbanization, as is often done—for instance by A. M. Rosenthal, city editor of the *N.Y. Times,* in his *Thirty-Eight Witnesses,* N.Y., 1964, McGraw-Hill—seems to me to be far from convincing. The increasing crime rate is relatively new; the sharp increase in violent crime is quite new; but the cities are not. Furthermore, these characteristics apparently do not prevail in all big cities—not, for example, in Moscow, Peking, or Havana.

The degree and/or the quality is consequential. Thus, defacement of public property no doubt long has been a popular and relatively harmless American past-time. But now there has appeared a grossness in such "sport" that is new. Thus, the National Park Service of the U.S. Government reported in 1964 not only a growth in "normal" defacing of monuments, etc., but that increasingly visitors are tearing up whole plants and killing trees, pulling out bathroom fixtures, dumping detergents into geysers, and feeding chocolate laxatives to bears.

That cruelty to children has not been unknown is attested to

by the existence of an American Society for its prevention. There is, however, something new here, too. The well-known psychiatrist, Robert Coles, wrote (in *The New Republic,* May 30, 1964) that he found it difficult "to believe my senses" upon learning "the fact that all over this country every year hundreds of children are brutally assaulted and many of them killed—in their own homes at the hands of their parents." This atrocity has been observed— or, at any rate, reported—only during the last ten or fifteen years. It has reached almost epidemic proportions. One study in 1962 found 662 cases of such abuse of children, of which one in four died of parent-inflicted injuries. The *N. Y. Times* (March 5, 1965) in an editorial entitled, "Suffer Little Children," declared:

> Complete statistics on the extent of the 'battered-child syndrome' are lacking. But an estimated 10,000 children a year are battered, maimed, burned, starved and broken in body, mind and spirit by the people who should care most for them. Clearly, this is a psychiatric as well as a legal problem.

And—a social problem.

Time Magazine, in the summer of 1964, praised very highly a British motion picture then making the rounds in the United States. This was called "Zulu"; unlike what *Time* called the spate of "whining" socially-critical films from England, such as "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner," this film frankly appealed to jingoism and chauvinism, and presented in detail mutual bayoneting and decapitating resulting finally in the triumph of Her Majesty's heroes. Concluded *Time:* "Zulu's blood-bath refreshes the spirit with its straightforward celebration of valor, tenacity and honor among men."

*   *   *

Acquisitive societies nourish and depend upon man's worst motives. Making a fetish of commodities, they tends towards the de-humanization of Man. In its most institutionalized form, this de-humanization manifests itself in racism. Indeed, originally racism held not to the idea of the natural and immutable inferiority of its objects but rather insisted that these victims were bestial—were not human. The impact of such ideas upon the

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characters obsessed by them and practicing them is demonstrated in such Honorable Personages as the late John Rankin, Theodore Bilbo and Herman Talmadge and the present Honorable Chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. Senate, James O. Eastland. From such a cesspool will come those who spend their Sundays blowing up children at prayer, or writing letters—with a show of moral indignation—such as this one published in *Time* (July 17, 1964) :

> I am outraged and disgusted that members of our U.S. Navy are used for the purpose of trying to locate three no-good rabblerousers in the South. Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman went to Mississippi looking for trouble, and if they got it, they deserved it.

Certain horrors are so staggering that they sometimes produce the belief that their existence reflects equally and totally upon Mankind; that all are guilty. Of the greatest sustained horror in history—the African slave trade—Malcolm Cowley, for instance, affirmed that it showed exactly this universal guilt of Man. This, however, equates quite falsely the victims with the victimizers; it ignores the state-backed and ruling-class backed and -financed reality of this business; it overlooks, also, those who were horrified by the atrocity and labored hard and sacrificially—and effectively— to wipe it out.

Similarly, of the one horror that seriously rivals the slave-trade —that is, the nazi crematoria—some have chosen to see it as demonstrating Man's allegedly essential inhumanity. Arthur Miller, for example, in *After the Fall*—whose set has Auschwitz as a back-drop —cries out that Auschwitz was built by all of us. Certainly, no one who has looked upon the camps and the ovens ever fully recovers from the numbness their reality induces. Years ago, I toured one of these with a Soviet army officer. He swept his arms toward the horror and said: "Here is imperialism gone mad." The officer is right and Miller is wrong. The inmates are not to be equated with the guards, and the guards are not to be equated with the Leaders and Statesmen and Financiers and Generals who conceived, instituted, maintained, and profited from it. Nor are any of these to be equated, even remotely, with the resisters against fascism.

The theory of universal guilt wipes out guilt as the theory of

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infinite causation wipes out causation. Universalizing guilt also rules out the possibility of effective struggle against evil; in this sense, those responsible for expounding and spreading such a theory really are "guilty."

The ultimate nightmare is created by the new weapons of human annihilation, and the fact that two of them—still in embryonic form —were used against people. The unprecedented nature of this threat also benumbs the mind and may lead to a sense of despair. Such moods induce surrender, or ultra-Leftism, which is the same thing, in another guise. They often promote withdrawal, passivity, sectarianism—all forms of a kind of alienation.

Speaking in November, 1962, Chief Justice Warren felt impelled to warn: "In civilized life, law floats in a sea of ethics. Each is indispensable to civilization. Without law, we should be at the mercy of the least scrupulous; without ethics, law could not exist." This cry of alarm certainly reflected awareness of the unethical and cannibalistic practices that have become characteristic of our society; in 1963, *The Nation* found so abundant its documentation that nothing less than an entire enlarged issue (dated June 1-8, and written by Fred J. Cook) was required for the purpose.

But the implacable necessities of an exploitative system induce its servants to announce the shedding of ethical fetters—even while others mouth devotion to "old-fashioned" values. Notorious was the repudiation of morality by the former Secretary of State and the still very influential Dean Acheson in a speech at Amherst College in December, 1964; a repudiation ecstatically hailed in an editorial entitled "When Ends Justify Means" in the *Wall Street Journal* (Dec. 11). A month after Mr. Acheson's pronouncement, Dr. Clifford F. Rassweiler, in *The Saturday Evening Post,* demanded "What's So Terrible About Germ Warfare?"; Dr. Rassweiler—who also sang the praises of chemical warfare—happens to be vice-president of Johns Manville Corp., and adviser to several government agencies, including the Pentagon.

While such theoreticians wax dramatic, technicians go about the task of napalming, firing phosphorus shells, spraying crop-killers, dispensing benevolent gasses and torturing women—in the name of freedom. So intense is the ethical decay in ruling circles in the United States that even a subservient British Foreign Secretary must plead with the American Congress to bear in mind the con-

cern expressed in our Declaration of Independence for "a decent respect for the opinion of Mankind."

A decadent society especially afflicts scientists, teachers, engineers, physicians; its values, pretenses and ethics affront particularly scholars, ministers and artists. In all such instances, while alienation basically derives out of the commodity character of the product and of its producer and the irrational and inhuman nature of the productive system, it is intensified by the notoriously deceptive, fraudulent and/or clearly harmful labor required from many of the system's servitors.

Relevant was the article entitled "Automation: The Potential for Prosperity," appearing in *Sperry-scope*—a Sperry-Rand Corp. publication—for the first quarter of 1964. Its author was Dr. L. T. Radir, president of the company's Univac Division. Therein appear these sentences:

> From a purely technical standpoint, we know enough to produce food for every hungry mouth . . . We know how to eliminate traffic jams . . . We know how to build virtually indestructible autos, washing machines, houses and other devices that will last a hundred years or more. We know how to build entire cities which are essentially waterproof.
>
> Why do we not do these things?
>
> Today it is not economically feasible.

There, in stark form, is expressed the contradiction between productive relations and human needs. Historically, there is no question as to which of these two must go. But, to the point of alienation, consider the impact upon the inhabitants of a society whose masters deliberately choose to protect those relations at the cost of those human needs.

It must be emphasized that the dehumanization appears most critically in those who do dominate and manipulate such a society. The ultimate is Hitler—or its personification as "The Doctor" in Hochhuth's *The Deputy*. That Doctor is the direct instrument of a system so rotten that life was a constant challenge to it; hence the system became systematized murder.

The rot is reflected in the frantic search for "pleasure" by the rich. Thus, four days prior to Bastille Day in 1964, the *N.Y. Times* bore this headline: "A Spree of Parties Fit for Kings Brings Paris Season to a Close." Most of the money for the spree came from

American heiresses—the ornamentation from the crowned scum that once floated about Baltic and Balkan states and have since been consigned to history's dump. After describing party after party, "romance" after "romance," the story ended:

> At last, even the stalwarts were like fashionably overdressed dolls as they shuffled through great rooms, only vaguely aware of the wonders of yet another minor Versailles. They were tiring of a steady diet of chilled lobsters and routinely exquisite French wines, and they were running out of witty conversation. It was time for the minuet to come to an end, and it did.

Indeed, time. And most of the world's inhabitants' are stirred by and stirring to different tunes.

* * *

In searching out the roots of this decay and its accompanying sense of alienation, no one has been so perceptive and so satisfactory as Marx. It is vital in this connection to observe, however, that he not only saw the roots of alienation in the private possession of the means of production and in all the antagonisms either created by or intensified by that system—labor a commodity, production social but appropriation individual, racism, male supremacy, the jealousy and hatred separating the young and the old, the systematic frustration of people by inhibiting their best and encouraging their worst. He saw also in this very alienation a source of the destruction of that system breeding it.

The alienation itself is part of the misery induced by the system; furthermore, while there is victimization, one does not have simply the victim but also the dissenter, the heretic, the rebel, the opponent. Indeed, the anti-human system inducing alienation, also produces that form of activity which overcomes alienation—i.e., revolutionary commitment and struggle, just as that activity overcomes the system that induces alienation.

Alienation signifies the decline of a social order; its appearance in acute form augurs the demise of a social order. Alienation is not oppression; alienation is an affliction. Its essence is a kind of anti-humanism; for a human this is, as it were, an illness. Bodies resist and, where possible, throw off illness.

Alienation therefore will be resisted particularly by those groups and classes in society whose interest and character are especially

affronted by it. This will include the working class whose productive and collective nature finds alienation most incongruous;* it will include youth who naturally seek fulfillment, who see wonder all about them, who are filled with aspiration and the sense of growth; it will include women, whose subordination is more and more irksome and whose basic relation to life and its nurturing makes the essence of alienation especially repugnant; it will include Negroes, whose particularly oppressed condition encourages solidarity, selflessness, and rebellion. It will include the best of the intelligentsia and creative workers who must be appalled by and must resist a social order which increasingly reminds one of the lines Wilfred Owen used to describe World War One companions —lines today with a literal quality to them:

> *Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots*
> *Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.*

Relevant is this paragraph from the late British socialist and historian, R. H. Tawney:**

> The revolt against capitalism has its source, not merely in material miseries, but in resentment against an economic system which dehumanizes existence by treating the mass of mankind, not as responsible partners in the co-operative enterprise of subduing nature to the service of mankind, but as instruments to be manipulated for the pecuniary advantage of a minority of property-owners, who themselves, in proportion as their aims are achieved, are too often degraded by the attainment of them.

*　*　*

The increasingly critical impact of the foul character of the

* The acute sense of frustration among American workers was described some time ago by Harvey Swados (*The Nation*, August 17, 1957) : "The worker's attitude toward his work is generally compounded by hatred, shame and resignation . . . Almost without exception, the men with whom I worked on the assembly line felt like trapped animals . . . They were sick of being pushed around by harried foremen . . . sick of working like blinkered donkeys, sick of being dependent for their livelihood on a maniacal production-merchandising setup, sick of working in a place where there was no spot to relax during the twelve-minute rest period."

** R. H. Tawney, *The Radical Tradition* (edited by Rita Hinden) (London, 1964, Allen & Unwin) , p. 139.

social organization manifests itself in well-known data. Thus, to be brief about it, Publication Number 6, 1964, U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, *Converging Social Trends: Emerging Social Problems,* stated:

> juvenile court cases per 1,000 children in the 10- to 17-year age group have almost tripled in the past two decades . . . there are believed to be more than five million alcoholics in the Nation today . . .
> about 153 people out of every 100,000 in the population entered a mental hospital in 1963 as compared to 92 out of 100,000 in 1940.

These are, no doubt, stark forms of protest and withdrawal— often appearing exactly among the most sensitive members of the society. Here one must note that with figures such as these, the capacity to function—the very viability—of the social order is placed in jeopardy because even an order which acts as though human beings were commodities—and in one sense really needs human beings only as commodities—still does require that human beings be human.

The frustrations and consequent alienation provoked by one of the central contradictions in American society—that stemming from male supremacy—are described keenly by Betty Friedan.* She adds that while this frustration is special, since the subordination is special, it appears also throughout a society which is geared toward limiting rather than encouraging "man's will to be all that is in him to be."

One critic found Mrs. Friedan's book unsatisfactory because, he wrote:** "The problem that Mrs. Friedan doesn't face is, how free can anyone be to define his or her own personality?" But the critic only raised the question; he did not face it either. In considering, however, the phenomenon of alienation it is a significant one. I would reply that no *one* is free to define his own personality because it is fundamentally a biologically, socially, and historically determined and shaped entity; it neither appears of itself nor

* Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (N. Y., 1963, Norton) ; the quoted matter is from p. 310. See also the Spring, 1964 issue of *Daedalus,* devoted to The American Woman.
** Wilfred Sheed, *The Commonweal,* March 17, 1964.

functions by itself. But the context within which it is shaped and functions—i.e., the social order—is subject to what he, and millions like him, think, want, need and do.

In this sense, the just-quoted critic, writing in a lay Catholic periodical might do well to re-examine the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, for there the late Pope John not only stressed the immorality of women's subjection, but also added: ". . . they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments." This growing intolerance is a very important element in the rising assertion of popular sovereignty which is the central feature of modern history. Mrs. Friedan's book is itself a good example of this truth.

This truth is shaking and re-making the globe. Our era is the era of popular revolution on a quantitative and qualitative scale without precedent. Its essential character is the same everywhere— though its form is and will continue to be varied—and that is the growing replacement of the private ownership of the means of production by its collective ownership. Insofar as the first has existed throughout recorded history, the socialist revolution seeks to resolve not only the contradictions of capitalism but also those inherited by and retained by capitalism. That, then, this revolution meets and has met great difficulties and setbacks is in no way surprising. On the contrary, that it now encompasses one-third of the globe and has appeared upon four continents signify its irresistible quality.

A basic element, I believe, in its irresistible historic attraction is that it makes *possible* a human social order, while its alternatives increasingly require inhuman societies. Socialism provides purpose—creative, fruitful purpose. It releases energy, it requires reason, it depends upon science, it cherishes life.

This is why Professor John Mackay—formerly President of the Princeton Theological Seminary—upon returning from a three-month visit to Revolutionary Cuba, hailed its spirit and vision, its humane consideration, its colossal and heroic program for social advance, and its extirpation of racism (*Christian Century,* Feb. 12, 1964) . This is why Howard Taubman of the *N.Y. Times*, upon returning from several months in the Soviet Union, wrote of the devotion he discovered there to creativity, the pride in talent and the passion for the beautiful (*N.Y. Times,* July 18, 1958) . This is why George Feifer, in his *Justice in Moscow* (N.Y., 1964, Simon

& Schuster), was so impressed with the total commitment to peace he found in the USSR and why, as he wrote: "Russians are now wholeheartedly engaged in an almost cosmic campaign to make men and society better—truthful, educated, happier, more cultured, more thoughtful."

The polarization observable on a world scale is present within the United States. While there is a lost soul who will spit upon the three youthful martyrs—Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman—still, of course, there *are* the martyrs. American youth—many of them— Negro and white, are devoted, committed, brave, purposeful and selfless. Their numbers are not small and they are growing. Their needs assure their existence. Given human survival, the effort to overcome oppression, exploitation and indignity appears and re-appears and cannot be—never has been—extinguished.

Fearful are the dangers, terrors, and temptations. And even in the struggle against them, special snares appear. Dante wrote of the snake and the man wrestling, the man conquering—and slithering away. Brecht, in his "To Posterity," wrote:

> *We knew only too well*
> *Even the hatred of squalor*
> *Makes the brow grow stern.*
> *Even anger against injustice*
> *Makes the voice grow harsh. Alas, we*
> *Who wished to lay the foundations of kindness*
> *Could not ourselves be kind.*

We will learn this, too. We will be stern and angry, and still be kind. Brecht was, and helped rid the earth of squalor. This is purpose enough for anyone. Commitment to it overcomes alienation. Success in it eliminates alienation.

III.

THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION
OF ALIENATION

Sidney Finkelstein

The aim of this paper is to indicate what light a study of the arts can throw upon alienation, and what light in turn a study of alienation can throw upon the problems of the arts.

An examination of art is seen as especially cogent to the study of alienation, because as viewed here, art is fundamentally tied to the process of humanization of reality, and this process is in opposition to the process of alienation. And so this paper will offer first, a concept of art as humanized reality; then, an examination of the forces making for alienation; and last, a view of what happens to art, and the social problem it raises, when art becomes itself an expression of alienation.

I.

Art as Humanization

Art is one of the many ways through which people explore and think about the world outside, appraise the changes they have brought about in it, and through this, discover their own growing qualities and potentialities as human beings.

Art accomplishes this as a specialized form of creative labor. It is creative in that it produces works which can continue to exist, as a social possession, after the artist has finished with them. Its specialization lies in its skills with its materials. There are the language of words, the building or carving of objects with various shapes, the organization of sounds in musical patterns of pitch and rhythm, the creation of images through drawing, coloring, modelling, and the organized movements of the human body.

These are the means that society has evolved for the purpose of reflecting life, thinking about it, exchanging experiences, and

organizing or enhancing communal activity.

All these materials are a social inheritance taken up by the artist, and they already have more than a mechanical quality, or in other words evoke a living or a human presence, as a social possession. Thus the most ordinary spoken and written language is more than a series of dictionary-definable units but has rhythm, intonation, vivid or colorful imagery. Shapes or images created for the most practical, utilitarian purpose, like tools, dwellings, drawings simply to record information, attain in their very creation, symmetry, curve, texture, rhythm. Music, in the form of song and dance, is as widespread a possession as language, and without this wide provenance in most people's minds and ears of at least a rudimentary but already emotionally evocative music, it is hard to see how individual works of creative music could come into being. People also express their inner states through their bodies. The most commonplace action or gesture has qualities which a painter's line or dancer's movement need only select, fix, isolate and incorporate into another context to become a living part of an art work.

Not only are the materials with which works of art are created given to the artist as a social heritage. Art serves social needs, and it comes into being under conditions or through channels evolved by society. Thus from the earliest civilizations public buildings called forth sculpture and painting. In more recent times, the rise of theatres goes hand in hand with the writing of plays, and the novel develops along with the institution of printing, book selling and libraries. The creations of art in turn become a part of social reality. The world is different because it possesses them.

Basic to the understanding of art is the unending labor process of changing the world to fit human needs. As things of the outer world are turned to human use, manipulated and reshaped, all their manifold qualities are disclosed and the senses grow in response to them. If things in nature appear to have entrancing form, it is because the development of human senses and skills through manifold shaping and form-creating activities have enabled human beings to perceive this. The beauty of art differs from that of nature in that a work of art is a man-made object, and whatever its practical function, or however close its image may be to the outer world, it embodies in its shape and make-up the

growth and presence of the human being in the process of discovery.

Art has subject matter and style, content, and form. The subject matter of an art work is some phenomenon in the outer world, or some function to perform, which also becomes a "subject"; that is, a challenge to the artist, a stimulus to thought, a problem to solve, a question to answer. The style of an art work is the unique pattern the artist gives to the socially-inherited materials for reflecting reality, so that they embody and can impart to others the heightened skills, senses and perceptions aroused in him during the process of creation. A work of art may embrace any kind of ideology or doctrine. Its real content, or artistic content, however, is its discovered truth, or in other words the illumination it brings to reality; its disclosure of something new born out of the old; its crystallization of a stage of growth of the human being in response to the surrounding world. This truth is affirmed by the heightened possibilities of life it brings to those who make it their own. The form of a work of art is the reflection, in its all-over structure, of the life-process of the artist in creating it. This life-process includes not only the organized work of the hands, eyes, ears and body, but also the work of the mind, the thinking about life and the resources of past experience brought to the problem at hand. It is this thinking which determines each step in the construction of the finished work.

As with all extensions of knowledge, the discoveries of the individual artist fix and bring into social consciousness a changed view of reality that has already been prepared for by the collective operations of society. The term reality, in reference to art, embraces both the outer, objective world of nature and human activity, and the inner, subjective psychological world of thought about life and response to it. There are many ways of recording the outer, objective world which are not art; natural science, the writing of history, journalism, sociology, statistics, economics, photography used simply for documentary purposes. The unique quality of art, a quality which sometimes touches the above activities and makes them enter—accidentally, so to speak—the realm of art, is that it discloses the inner world, corresponding to the outer. In other words, it shows what it means to live at a certain moment, or stage of development, of social life and the conquest of nature. It replaces fact with typicality. It discloses not an actual event but a pattern of outer movement, as a force operating on human hopes

and feelings. If the history of the arts shows the utmost diversity in this relationship of inner and outer worlds, from a super-objective art which seems almost mechanistically documentary to an overwhelmingly subjective art which seems to be only a private world of the emotions, this only means that to look at art appreciatively it must also be looked at critically. To see it critically is to place its disclosures into the context of the real world that all people share. This is another way of saying that really to appreciate a work of art, we must ask, what is it that we learn from it; applicable to all of us; what has been clarified for us that was obscure; what blindness has been turned into knowledge; how have our perceptions and ways of thinking about the world changed?

Art also possesses, and must possess, beauty. Beauty is the awareness of the development of the human senses, as they have grown in response to the continually advancing discovery of the richness of the external world. We can call this development of the senses a product of the humanization of the real world. There is first the humanization of nature, engendered by the adaptation of nature to fit human needs. Through this the secrets of nature are progressively discovered, its laws are revealed so that they come to be consciously used as instruments of human progress, and the mind is enriched by the disclosure of nature's manifold sensuous qualities. There is secondly the humanization of human relations. With the changes, conflicts in and reorganizations of society that make up history, there is a progressive discovery, understanding, mastery and reshaping of the laws governing the organization of society. Human relations become more human in the sense that destructive antagonisms are replaced by cooperation, ignorance and fear are replaced by kinship and understanding and through cooperation the individual is enabled to develop more freely.

Each stage in the humanization of the external world, including both nature and society, is a stage in the growth of the human being, an enlargement of the scope of individual life, an awareness of a step towards freedom, and a growth of the senses. What happens is not a change in the physical basis of sense perception, but rather that with the new, more fruitful relationships of the individual to the outer world, the eyes "open up" so to speak. Each outer discovery is also an awareness of internal powers and richness. The individual grows by continually rediscovering him-

self in the outer world. The esthetic emotion, the recognition of beauty, is the joyous consciousness of this leap in human powers. When we find that a work has the joy and excitement of beauty, this is another way of saying that we have learned from it, in the special way that makes us feel our senses have grown, our powers have become heightened, the world is a little more understandable, and we can thereby live a little differently. The history of the arts is a record of the successive stages in the humanization of reality. The arts reveal, as no other human product can, this process of humanization, of showing it not only in what is depicted from life, but also and more important, in the way it is depicted, the human involvement with outer reality.

Thus Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* show us a society in which the concept of human kinship is narrowly restricted and life is held very cheap. The personages they create, within a framework of myth, represent a powerful advance in human portraiture, linking the outer lineaments and actions of people to a convincing inner or psychological life. But these figures are an aristocracy transmuted into gods and myth-heroes. In these civilizations based on slavery, the new awareness of what a human being is, over that of primitive life, does not generally encompass the slaves or those who toil in the fields. Even the heroes have, by later standards, a limited humanity. Thus it is great praise, for the author of these poems, to compare Menelaus in ferocity to a lion.

> He was like a mountain lion who believes in his own strength and pounces on the finest heifer in a grazing herd. He breaks her neck with his powerful jaws, and then he tears her to pieces and devours her blood and entrails, while all around him the herdsmen and their dogs create a din but keep their distance—they are heartily scared of him and nothing would induce them to close in. (Trans. E. V. Rieu)

So when Odysseus returns home and slaughters the suitors who were courting his wife, the poem admiringly compares him and his henchmen to vultures, and there is no sympathy for the dead.

> Skulls cracked, the hideous groans of dying men were heard, and the whole floor ran with blood. They lay in heaps in the blood and dust, like fish that the fishermen have dragged out of the grey surf in the meshes of their net onto

> a bend of the beach to lie in masses on the sand gasping for
> the salt water till the bright sun ends their lives.

Odysseus likewise strangles all the servingwomen of the house-
hold, "like doves or long-winged thrushes caught in a net across
a thicket where they had come to roost, and meeting death where
they had only looked for sleep."

In fact, there is more humanity, with its lovely opening up of
the eyes and senses to the external world, in the nature images
than in the actions for which these images serve as figures of speech.
At least one of those who transcribed and developed the Homeric
epics must have been close to those who wrested their living from
nature; the herdsmen, hunters, fishermen, sowers of grain. But to
point out the comparative callousness these great epics display to
death and slaughter is not to denigrate them. By being true to
their age, they show us a stage in our own development, and at
the same time carry the process of humanization to the utmost
limits their age made possible.

Similarly, to say that the arts of later ages show a further advance
in the humanization of life, or in the view of human kinship and
potentialities, is not to say that these are necessarily greater works.
The greatness of art lies in its ability to rise up to the truth its age
makes possible. Later works must do likewise for their age in order
to even approach the same standard.

If we leap to the Renaissance in Europe and its counterpart in
England, the Elizabethan age, we can find in the art a new stage in
humanization, with a disclosed depth of psychological conflict, a
breadth of social compassion, a respect for human life, impossible
in the Homeric age. In the interim had come the middle ages,
which, differently from slave-holding societies, gave the serf and
peasant at least in the next life, an immortal soul on a par with
his aristocratic masters. Then peasant revolts and the power of the
burgher class in the cities had challenged the institutions of feudal
society, laying the ground for the rise of humanism. So Shakespeare,
in *Troilus and Cressida,* portrays in the most contemptuous way
the warring and love-making Greek heroes whom Homer had
ennobled, and it is a slave, Thersites, who cries: "Lechery, lechery;
still wars and lechery; nothing else holds fashion; a burning devil
take them." Prowess in sex and war are no longer in themselves
admirable. And in the play *Henry V,* a common soldier raises the

question of whether the war is a just one. He points out bitterly that when noblemen are taken prisoner they are held for ransom, while the common soldiers' throats are cut. He announces that the common soldiers are also human beings, who suffer even as the aristocracy do when they die.

> But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all these legs and arms and heads, chopped off in battle, shall join together at the latter day, and cry all, "We died at such a place"; some swearing; some crying for a surgeon; some upon their wives left poor behind them; some upon the debts they owe; some upon their children rawly left.

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare portrays two murderers whom Macbeth hires to kill Banquo. They appear in the play only briefly, and are nameless. Yet Shakespeare must ask himself what it is that makes men murder. Macbeth questions them, and they answer:

SECOND MURDERER

I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Hath so incensed, that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURDERER

And I another,
So weary with disasters tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on't.

The former has been so hurt by the incessant blows of life that he hates the whole world and everybody in it, looks upon all society as his enemy, and would defiantly blow it all up and himself too; a kind of anarchist-existentialist. The other is an ambitious man, whose plans have turned to disasters, and he is willing to take a desperate chance to regain his station in life; a gambler. Shakespeare does not condone murder; rather the contrary. But he makes us understand that these are human beings, of the same stuff and same world as we, corrupted by forces which we ourselves have seen and felt.

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The advances in humanization in the arts are made possible by struggles in real life. So it took the break-up of the feudal world in Europe to make possible the portraits that Titian painted of popes and Shakespeare created of kings, abolishing the aura of divinity and showing them as troubled, conflictful human beings. It took the revolutionary rise of the Dutch republic to make possible the beauty that 17th century Dutch art discloses in scenes of the poor people, the aged, the working folk and the common occupations of village life, the labor of tilling the soil and fishing in the sea, and the simple landscape itself as seen from the villagers' eye. For it was these very people, the "nobodies of society" to prejudiced, upper-class feudal minds, who had taken part in the successful struggle for independence and were now broadening the scope of art to include their own humanity. In 19th century Russia it took the social upheavals, the movements for freedom of the peasantry, the growing criticism of Tsardom and feudal-minded aristocracy, to make possible the beauty of the portrayals of the peasantry that are found in the writings of Turgenev and in the operas and songs of Mussorgsky.

One further example will be cited of art as an expression of humanized reality. It is John Keats's *Ode to Autumn.*

Marx, defining the labor process in *Capital,* says that in the process of appropriating nature's productions in a form adapted to man's own wants, in acting on the external world and changing it, man "changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway." To expand on this, we can say that when man adapts nature to his own needs, nature in turn educates him. As he discovers thus the laws of nature, they give structure to his thought. And the manifold sensuous qualities of nature, its colors, shapes and sounds, create a new sensitivity in him, as if he were learning to see and hear differently from before. This is what Keats intuitively imparts to us in the poem. It is in three stanzas.

The first stanza describes autumn in terms overflowing with the feeling of ripening crops, loaded vines, tree branches bending with the weight of apples, hives brimming over with honey.

> *Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,*
> *   Close bosom—friend of the maturing sun:*
> *Conspiring with him how to load and bless*

> With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
> To bend with apples the mossed cottage trees,
> And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
> To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
> With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
> And still more, later flowers for the bees
> Until they think warm days will never cease,
> For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

In the second stanza, Keats fancifully addresses an ancient fertility goddess, like the Greek Demeter or Ceres. But he also, through this, offers a succession of images of the human labor that brings forth this fruitfulness; the threshers, reapers, gleaners balancing a basket of grain on their heads while crossing a stream, watchers at a cider press.

> Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store:
> Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
> Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
> Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
> Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
> Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
> Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
> And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
> Steady thy laden head across a brook;
> Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
> Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Then in the third, climactic stanza, a miracle happens. We seem to have reverted to nature. But it is now nature seen in a new light, not merely nature the producer of useful crops but nature humanized in every aspect. The human being's senses have grown in response to it, and it is not simply the fruits but the intimacy to everything about nature which now seems beautiful; the fields, the glow of light, the chamber music of its sounds.

> Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
> Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
> While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
> And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue
> Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
> Among the river sallows, borne aloft

> *Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;*
> *And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;*
> *Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft*
> *The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;*
> *And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.*

One of the most ridiculous, self-serving theories aiming to justify modern abstract art is the claim that realistic art is simply a "dull copying of nature." I am not here criticizing the abstract art work, but only the shallow theories spun around it, that do it no good. Keats here, for example, is not giving us a documentary catalogue of the sounds of autumn. There are conditions in fact under which people might find the bleat of lambs or whine of gnats not very enticing. What the poem gives us so wonderfully, and what we take from it, is a human presence, a state of human life; the human being in a special, close intimacy with nature so that his senses quiver to its most evanescent sounds, and the country-side, air and sky seem to be a part of his own body and mind. The same kind of humanization of simple scenes from nature can be found in the paintings of Keats's contemporary, John Constable. Constable's work can be analyzed in purely abstract terms as a play with subtle color harmonies. But he found these harmonies in nature. He had of course to be sensitive to them. And like Keats, he does not simply tell us things. He opens our eyes. And he also reveals himself to us.

There is a special quality in the Keats poem which links it to the early 19th century. There had been portrayals of humanized nature long before; in ancient Greek poetry, for example. But here we have a much more subtle and complex psychological sensitivity. It is not discovery of nature but rediscovery. It is not the pastoral poetry of one who lives in the fields. It presents a mind turning back to nature in temporary flight from the bustle and turmoil of city life, in flight from the industrial revolution, with its laceration of human beings. It gives us a man recovering his humanity, as an implied protest against the alienation from nature almost forced by the conditions of industrial life. He restores our humanity. And with this, we can embark on the examination of alienation itself, in its artistic depiction and expression.

II.

Alienation

Alienation is here taken as a psychological phenomenon generated by forces in society and having social repercussions. More specifically, it is understood as a phenomenon which appears with capitalism and rises to its highest intensity with the crises of capitalism in the 20th century.

This may seem to be a narrower view than others have. It can be said that when the human being achieved a consciousness of himself as separate from nature, was pitted against it, so to speak, and also was aware of his own consciousness as something that can die, there was what could be called an "estrangement" from non-human nature. But, as we have glimpsed, the very opposition of man and nature, taking the form of the labor process, creates a kind of unity between man and nature, a humanization of nature, on a higher level, the level illustrated for example by Keats's ode. It could be said again that estrangement appeared in social antagonisms; that from the rise of private property—that is, private ownership or control of the means of production necessary for the life of society—there were antagonistic classes, like those of slave-owner and slave, or aristocrat and serf or peasant, and consequently estrangement and hostility. Certainly this hostility has manifested itself in historical struggles, and the arts of the past are replete with examples of a ruling class and those serving it with art works regarding the exploited as non-human, as "alien", as animals, clowns or buffoons. Yet these situations are regarded here as a pre-condition for alienation. The phenomenon of alienation as it appears with capitalism is so much of a leap, so qualitatively different, that it must be examined in its own terms. And in this respect the arts provide a valuable insight. For the phenomenon here depicted as the artistic expression of alienation appears not only with capitalism, but with the severest and most devastating crises of capitalism.

What are the specific differences under capitalism?

First, even though feudal landed property is, as Marx says in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, "huckstered land," there are mollifying characteristics. As Marx notes, "for those belonging to it, the estate is more like their fatherland." Even under the abysmally impoverished conditions of life under

feudalism, the peasant feels that something of the land is still his and supports him. His hut is his. The artisan feels that what he makes is his own product. With capitalism, however, the worker is cut off from the earth as something that supports him. He does not even have shelter, that he can call his. All he has is his labor power, and he must hire it to someone who can use it profitably, while nothing that he creates with this labor power is even remotely his. It is in fact both his support and his enemy. As Marx says, "the object which labor produces confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer." Not only does the accumulated product threaten him with unemployment and starvation, but no part of it, no shape, no element, is the product of his own awakened sensitivity, as happens in works of folk artisanship with their humanization and beauty. Thus the worker's alienation, while stemming from outer conditions, appears as an internal conflict. He seems to be opposed to himself.

Secondly, the estrangement of classes in previous societies had a mythological, religious and ideological support involving a very limited view of humanity itself. Theoretically, the kings and aristocracy of ancient civilizations were no ordinary humans, but kin to the gods; a different order of beings from slaves and commoners. And even in medieval Europe, the status of kings and aristocracy had the blessing of divine ordinance. While it cannot be said that these concepts were universally accepted, still their widespread provenance indicated a comparatively low level of understanding of the nature of a human being; a counterpart to the cheapness with which human life was held. It is with capitalism, in its revolutionary rise against the feudal world, that the truth is advanced, as a rallying cry, of the equality of all people, and their kinship. There is the universal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of the American Declaration of Independence, and its affirmation that government rests on the consent of the governed. There is the liberty, equality and fraternity, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, of the French Revolution. (Equality means, of course, equality of rights and opportunity, in opposition to privilege of family; not equality of talents, skills, abilities, gifts. This obvious point has to be made because even so eminent and influential a mind as Freud suffers from this confusion, as in his book *Civilization and its Discontents*).

It is as capitalism reaches its triumph in the 19th century under

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this banner, that the most oppressive inequality appears, the inequality of exploitation; the worker possessing only his labor power facing the owner of the means of production. Even this inequality is described as "equality," and "freedom." The worker is presumed to be a merchant, selling his labor power, to another merchant, the capitalist, and they "bargain." Whereas in feudal society the peasant knew what he was giving to the master, in the form of money taxes, or products, or labor on the master's fields, here the worker presumably gets paid for what he sells. But, as Marx showed, in his analysis of how the worker's pay gravitates about his bare subsistence, while the capitalist's capital strangely multiplies into profits and more profits, the real situation is quite different. So here again, just as the worker is divided within himself, his own labor product becoming alien to him, so all capitalist society is at war with its own birthprocess, its equality turning into the grossest inequality.

Thirdly, in previous societies, among the ruling classes, the kings and nobles, there had been rivalry, competition for power, and war. But this competition did not take the continuous, internecine character as it does under capitalism, where it is part of the very way in which capital must operate to live. Not only is each unit of capital pitted against another in its drive for profit, but everything subject to the marketplace—talent, skill, labor power—is thereby thrust into competition for its own survival. And so, the very process that expands the freedom of the individual also takes this freedom away. All talents, including art and science, dwindle in the face of the talent for making money, and in fact face a life-or-death struggle to keep from being enslaved by it.

Capitalism proclaims and establishes the rights and liberation of the individual personality, but in the marketplace form to which this freedom is confined, each individual's freedom is continually being lacerated and attacked by the others about him, also seeking their freedom. Individual growth and freedom, a social product, becomes individualism, an anti-social attitude. Capitalism breeds a society of individuals each of whom sees himself at war with society.

Lastly, there takes place an alienation of human beings from nature quite different from the opposition between man and nature inherent in the labor process. Now the mastery of nature,

the penetration of its secrets, the discovery of its laws, the ability to turn it to an instrument for the advancement of the possibilities of life, reaches a peak previously inconceivable. But at the same time, nature is turned into commodity. Nothing has any attraction, or is even permitted to exist, if it cannot be turned into money or profit. The products of human imagination, skills and brains are likewise commodities. The possibility of an expansion of the senses turns into their devastation. As Marx writes: "An object is only ours when we have it—when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited etc.,—in short, when it is used by us. . . . In place of all these physical and mental senses has therefore come the sheer estrangement of all these senses—the sense of having."

Thus, alienation is more than a person's hostility to or estrangement from what is outside. It is also an internal conflict; an estrangement from what is outside, and yet is so firmly bound to the person, so much a part of his life process, that it is also estrangement from part of himself. And because it appears as an internal entity, it seems to many to come not from outside or social conditions at all, but to be part of man's eternal fate, destiny or "tragedy," a product purely of the mind.

III.

Art and Alienation

Against the background of the forces making for alienation in bourgeois life, the work of the great artists continues to operate as a force for humanization. This humanization is seen in images that evoke a very definite kinship in the reader or onlooker, an awareness of common humanity, an education of the mind and senses. Of these artists, it would be wrong to say that the criticism they make or imply is a rejection of all of bourgeois life. Rather, they are aware of its contradictions, and they contrast its promises and hopes to its realities. What makes such artists a force for humanization is not that they ignore the phenomenon of aliena-tion. Rather, their greatness is that they face it and record it, as part of the real world they are exploring, and at the same time through its very depiction, assert the common humanity of people.

We have seen how, with a few strokes, Shakespeare shows two

men who have turned to the monstrosity of hired murder, as shaped by a competitiveness in social life that his listeners have also felt. In the 17th century Rembrandt paints portraits of the poor, the middle class and the wealthy, showing them as troubled, lonely, even defeated by life, but the effect of his genius is that of humanization, disclosing that all of them are brothers of those who view them, regardless of wealth or station. We have seen how Keats's ode is a force for the restoration of a truly human response to nature.

The social, realistic novel devotes itself directly to alienation as a social phenomenon. Marx writes derisively of bourgeois miserliness.

> The less you eat, drink and read books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public-house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you save—the greater becomes your treasure which neither moths nor dust will devour—your capital. The less you are, the more you have; the less you express your own life, the greater is your alienated life—the greater is the store of your estranged being.

This puts in analytic terms what Balzac reveals in artistic terms in a novel like *Eugenie Grandet.* Old man Grandet, obsessed with the magical power of money to multiply itself, and to command everything good in life, cannot bring himself to give up any of it. He becomes one of the wealthiest men in France but lives like a peasant, and in the process of destroying his own humanity, makes his wife a slave and destroys his daughter's chances for happiness. *Father Goriot* is another study of alienation, with the situation reversed. The artisan father's laboriously amassed money has enabled his two daughters to marry into high society. But all marital and love relations on this level are contaminated by money, for love itself is bought and sold. The daughters are ashamed of their father's low station, yet keep running to him for help, and hate him the more because they have to resort to him. Such portrayals of alienation are not to be dismissed as sociological art. Within a clear delineation of the social context of the problem, they show the relation between outer and inner worlds; how changing conditions in society bring to birth a new psychology,

or complex pattern of human behavior. This insight, in turn, determines the form and structure of the novel itself, the succession of events, the dramatic climaxes and their resolution. The novels themselves humanize the alienated life they portray, by showing the victims as human beings even like the reader, tragically wasting what could be most precious in their lives.

Dickens treats of the drive for money, with the accompanying alienation of human beings from one another and from their own humanity, in novel after novel; *Our Mutual Friend, Great Expectations, Dombey and Son,* and *Little Dorrit* for example. Dickens looms so high among English novelists because, despite sentimentalities of style and crudities of form that are easy to point to, he has dealt consistently and profoundly with this fundamental social-psychological reality. He is also the most "human" of novelists, so to speak, in the demand made by almost every passage in his books that the relations among people must be made human again.

The towering figure among American novelists is Theodore Dreiser, for much the same reason. Here too there are real and fancied crudities that critics have been all too ready to deride. But he has created a series of figures who have an eternal life, more real than the real personages of the times. Dreiser's Carrie Meeber, George Hurstwood, Frank Cowperwood, Clyde Griffiths, belong to history, standing for the personalities shaped by the social forces in American life. Alienation is the problem, as in *An American Tragedy*. Clyde Griffiths is educated into the morality taught to him every day by the rough and tumble of American life. To have money is good. What it can buy are the good things of life. His parents, two old religious people, wonder what it is that has taken their son away from them, and made him a stranger. He loves a girl, and she loves him. But then the door opens for him to the glamorous life of the wealthy, and she is the obstacle. So when they are boating and she falls into the water he is almost paralytically held back from saving her, in the moment it takes for her to drown. And as a final irony, society self-righteously condemns Clyde to death for abusing its official morality by embracing its real morality. It cannot condemn itself, or recognize that he is its own monster-image of alienation; that its image of the "good life" has paralyzed his humanity.

Two passages from Dreiser express as well as any the attitude of

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the artist who faces the tragic as a humanizer of reality. They come from the book of sketches, *The Color of a Great City*, and they complement each other.

In the first he speaks of the beauty he finds even in the dismal places of the city.

> Here are the birds daily circling in the air; here are the waters running in a thousand varied forms; here are the houses, the churches, the factories, and all their curious array of lines, angles, circles, cones, or towers, shafts and pinnacles which form ever new and pleasing combinations to which the mind, confused by other phases of life, can still turn for both solace and delight . . . To be dull to the finer beauties of line and curve that are forever beating upon the heart and mind—in earth, in air, in water, in sky or space—how deadly! The dark places of the world are full of that. Its slums and depths reek with the misery that knows no response to the physical beauty of nature, the wonder of its forms.

In the second, he speaks of the infants daily abandoned at foundling institutions; children thus robbed of a home.

> We are so dull. Sometimes it requires ten thousand or ten million repetitions to make us understand. "Here is a condition. What will you do about it? Here is a condition. What will you do about it? Here is a condition. What will you do about it?" That is the question each tragedy propounds, and finally we wake up and listen. Then slowly some better way is discovered, some theory developed. We find often that there is an answer to some questions, at least if we have to remake ourselves, society, the face of the world, to get it.

The new development of the 20th century is the conquest of the artist by alienation. Instead of a humanized view of alienation in life, the artist expresses his own alienation from the world about him. He abandons the historic role of the humanization of nature and human relations. Instead nature appears hostile, inimical, repulsive, and his fellow human beings are presented like monsters, or as if coming from another, strange and fearful world with which the artist feels no spark of kinship. And this development, if at first it comes like a shock, is soon hailed as a revolution in the arts and a return of art to first principles. To give a short example,

if a typical image of humanized nature is Shakespeare's

> *and then my state*
> *like to the lark at break of day arising*
> *From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;*

a typical image of alienated nature is T. S. Eliot's

> *Let us go then, you and I,*
> *When the evening is spread out against the sky*
> *Like a patient etherized upon a table;*

This art of alienation is a deeply subjective art. Its predecessor is an art of intense inwardness, of stream of consciousness, symbolism or impressionism, in which the artist finds that only his own lonely sensitivity gives shape to an outer world that seems otherwise chaotic and meaningless. The artistic expression of alienation, however, sees itself as a return to objectivity. But its objective reality, which it "humanizes," dwindles to a naturalistic data of purely physical sensations, as if only hard "concreteness" were reality; and an emphasis is on acts of violence, or love as an animal act, as if this shock quality were a guarantee of reality. This pseudo "concreteness" extends to the sheer materials of expression of the artist. These, such as words, rhythms, paints, musical tones, spaces, volumes, become no longer means for evoking or thinking about reality, but things in themselves, with their own intrinsic life, their own mysterious ability to arouse emotional states Thus T. S. Eliot, in his essay, *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca,* says that the poet's job is not to think, but only to take whatever ready-made thoughts are given to him, and clothe them in apt language. Stravinsky, in his *Musical Poetics,* says that music is incapable of expressing anything at all, not even psychological states. The modern abstract-expressionist painters say that their devotion is solely to the "act of painting." A historic "masterpiece" of alienation in music is Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* of 1913. He employs Russian folk tunes in this work. But the effect of the acid harmonies and obsessive, pounding rhythms is to squeeze out of the melody the warmth, the evocation of human presence, with a craftsmanship that can be admired once the listener is able to harden himself to the visceral impact and laceration of human

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sensitivity projected by the music. In sculpture, an example is Alberto Giacometti's "Woman with a Cut Throat." The bronze looks like a partly eviscerated, partly skeletonized body. It is possible to appreciate the formal organization of the work, such as its rhythms and contours, if the onlooker is willing to do violence, first, to his own human sympathies. Or else there are Giorgio di Chirico's paintings of the 1910's, of bleak, desolate buildings looming over dwarfed human figures, like life turned into death.

Cries of anguish can be found in this art. But it is not the kind of art in which the artist raises this as a problem the real world can illuminate. Rather, it projects its loneliness and despair as fundamental, revealed truth of all life, and the alienated imagery serves to shock the readers, listeners or onlookers out of any "illusions," so to speak, they have of their own humanity, or the world's. Thus T. S. Eliot, in his history-making poem, *The Waste Land*, of 1922 writes:

> *Son of man. . . . you know only*
> *A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,*
> *And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief*
> *And the dry stone no sound of water.*

Sometimes in this poem Eliot will interweave images of nature hostile, repulsive, alienated, with evocations of past humanist poetry, as if to intensify the feeling of a world once alive, now dying. Thus, the following passage recalls Andrew Marvel's *"But at my back I always hear Time's winged chariot hurrying near:"* and Shakespeare's *"With mine eyes . . . beheld the king my father wrackt."*

> *But at my back in a cold blast I hear*
> *The rattle of the bones, and chuckles spread from ear to ear.*
> *A rat crept softly through the vegetation*
> *Dragging its slimy belly on the bank*
> *While I was fishing in the dull canal*
> *On the winter evening round behind the gashouse*
> *Musing upon the king my brother's wreck*
> *And on the king my father's death before him.*

This is not of course intended by Eliot as a description of an actual scene. Its images of the outer world are symbolic, the

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cumulative effect of them being that of the world and nature alienated from man, forbidding, destructive, and this becomes the sounding board against which the "human portrait" of the poem, the poet's loneliness and despair, reverberates; a "portrait" presented as universal truth, the eternal condition of the sensitive human being.

It is not a pessimistic attitude alone that produces an alienated style. Robert Frost, for example, does not have an optimistic view of life. One of his short poems, for example, begins:

> *A bird half wakened in the lunar noon*
> *Sang half way through its little inborn tune.*

The poet thinks of predatory animals that might hear the song and track the bird down. But, he says, it sang only once, its song was short, it was not exposed high on a bush, and so its little half-song was not as perilous a venture as one might at first think. He concludes:

> *It could not have come down to us so far*
> *Through the interstices of things ajar*
> *On the long bead chain of repeated birth*
> *To be a bird while we are men on earth*
> *If singing out of sleep and dream that way*
> *Had made it much more easily a prey.*

Frost implies that life, not only for birds but men, is a blind struggle for existence, so that to be alive is a product of chance, of innumerable lucky accidents and escapes from peril. Yet the poem still presents humanized reality. For to Frost, life is worth living and to live has its gratifications.

Eliot's treatment of common speech is alienated, as in this passage from *The Waste Land:*

> *O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—*
> *It's so elegant*
> *So intelligent. . . .*
> *When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—*
> *I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,*
> *HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME*
> *Now Albert's coming back, make your self a bit smart.*

He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave
you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

Where a Mark Twain, a Carl Sandburg, a John Steinbeck, all deeply human writers, record common speech as a labor of affection, Eliot's is a labor of contempt, even hatred. He seems to be seeing and listening to the people as if they are, compared to him, a strange sort of animal.

For art that thus expresses the artist's alienation, as with any other current in the arts, it is difficult or impossible to find a precise beginning. What can be said is that it becomes a significant current in the second decade of the 20th century, receives a strong impetus from the first world war, and, at least in the United States, becomes the "fashion" in the "cold war" 1950's. It is closely connected to the movements known as "modernism" or "avant-garde" but it is not synonymous with them. The catastrophic wars and crises of the 20th century aroused a widespread disillusion with Capitalist society. It had doffed the humanistic mask in outbreaks of savage violence and hypocrisy, and the arts reflected this. At the same time, within this general response of the arts to the shocks and tragedies of the times, there were many different approaches. There were artists who went through periods of tragic subjectivism, or broke forth in caustic, derisive satire aimed at "official society," and so seemed to share an alienated style, yet who preserved a fundamental humanism and never made a total esthetic or philosophy out of a style of alienation.

In literature, for example, T. S. Eliot is the high priest of alienation, both in style and literary theory. One cannot find in any of his work a human portrait to which the reader can warm up, or feel akin, unless it is those rare moments when his own desolation breaks out. Carl Sandburg, however, was considered in the 1920's one of the "modern" poets in his free verse, yet he is one of the most humanist of American writers, and his remarkable *The People, Yes*, of 1936 is a historic treatise in the form of poetry on a humanized look at the common people and their ways of life and talk. The ill-fated, confused Hart Crane was fundamentally a poet in a style of humanized reality, as is E. E. Cummings in his best, most touching lyrics.

In music, Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Bartok often have been

cited as following similar paths, and all produced at times a bleak, bitter, or caustically mocking music, using similar rhythmic and harmonic devices. Yet Stravinsky, like Eliot in poetry, has remained the great apostle of alienation, preaching it in theory and embodying it in practice. One would be hard put to find any warmth at all in most of his works, within their remarkable craftsmanship. On the other hand, Prokofiev and Bartok remained basically humanizers in music if deeply troubled ones. This is felt in the loveliness, charm and genuine tenderness of Prokofiev's lyricism, and in Bartok's creative use of Hungarian and other folk motifs as a language of profound expression, both for deep poignance and for boisterous laughter. It is these qualities that have won their music a widespread affection that Stravinsky's music will never earn, despite the cults created about him as of no other 20th century composer. Perhaps the attraction he has to the cultists in this period is the fact that he teaches how music can be written without the need to look at life and the troubles of one's fellowmen.

In painting, cubism might be cited as a historic development of a style moving towards alienation, but there are contradictions in it. Cezanne is considered to be its spiritual father, and his statement that one must look in nature for "the cylinder, the sphere, the cone" is quoted as justification for a style of alienation from nature. Yet his own work, whether dealing with landscape or people is fundamentally one of humanized reality. Picasso and Braque worked together for a while on cubism, and produced work that seems very similar. Yet Picasso, with all his episodes of anguish at a world which seems to be at times hopelessly anti-human, for all his frequent derisive laughter at his onlooker—indeed the artist as the mountebank as the jester who must wear a mask and cavort before a hostile audience, is one of his basic symbols—never breaks altogether with the tradition of humanized reality. Braque, however, is the colder, more mechanical artist, more alienated, finding his own humanity to the extent he can in his manipulation of line, shape, color, and space.

Thus alienation, as artistic expression, is not simply a crisis art. And the direct line out of cubism—a line which Picasso never took —is towards just so much of life permitted to enter art as can be tolerated by geometry and flat space patterns, while color is robbed of the evocation of light that had been a prime tool for depicting humanized reality. It is an art of one who, affected by crises, has

arrived at certain conclusions about people, abandoned hope for them, and in cutting himself off from them has also cut away a part of himself, his own humanity. It does not rest on whatever political, social or historical information the artist has, although in revealing his own feelings about people, his own comradeship, so to speak, it tells us what is likely to be, in the long run, his political attitude.

A case in point is John Dos Passos. His trilogy, *U. S. A.*, the three sections of which were published in 1930, 1932 and 1936, is the most impressive in scope of American social-political novels. It portrays the first three decades of the 20th century with a scathing exposure of the corruption of government and courts by big business, the hypocrisy of politicians, the savage attacks upon the labor movement, the profiteering and brutality that characterized the first world war, the cynical demolition of American democratic traditions. In opposition to this it shows the heroic struggles of organized labor and the radical Left, culminating in the lost fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti. The writing is that of a consummate craftsman. Yet, despite the occasional appearance of passages of humanized reality, the dominating tone of the writing is that of alienation.

This tone seems apropos enough when Dos Passos writes of those on the side of reaction, describing them with a dead-pan objectivity, as in portraying the creator of a public relations service for big business.

> Then one day Robbins took Ward aside and said that he had syphilis and would have to follow the straight and narrow. Ward thought the matter over a little and offered him a job in the New York office that he was going to open as soon as he got home . . . Ward didn't have to write any copy after that and could put in all his time organizing the business. Old Mrs. Staple had been induced to put fifty thousand dollars into the firm. Ward rented an office at 100 Fifth Avenue, fitted it up with Chinese porcelain vases and cloisonné ashtrays from Vantine's and had a tigerskin rug in his private office. He served tea in the English style every afternoon and put himself in the telephone book as J. Ward Moorehouse, Public Relations Counsel.

And it seems to convey the mentality and sex life of Charley

Anderson, a mechanic and flier in the war who becomes a tycoon of the airplane industry. Here Charlie has been rebuffed by a calculating girl Doris.

> The bar was full of men and girls half tight and bellowing and tittering. Charlie felt like wringing their goddam necks. He drank off four whiskies one after another and went around to Mrs. Darling's. Going up in the elevator he began to feel tight. . . . "Hello, dearie." He hardly looked at the girl. "Put out the light," He said. "Remember your name's Doris. Go in the bathroom and take your clothes off and don't forget to put on lipstick, plenty lipstick." He switched off the light and tore off his clothes. In the dark it was hard to get the studs out of his boiled shirt. He grabbed the boiled shirt with both hands and ripped the buttonholes. "Now come in here, goddam you. I love you, you bitch Doris." The girl was trembling.

But an alienated style dominates the account also of the radicals. They lead—as Dos Passos depicts them—the most unhappy, cheerless lives; lonely, driven by bitter feelings, taking on radical activity as if being driven to martyrdom. Thus he writes of Mac, who joins for a while Big Bill Haywood's Wobblies.

> Big Bill talked about solidarity and sticking together in the face of the masterclass and Mac kept wondering what Big Bill would do if he got a girl in trouble like that. Big Bill was saying the day had come to start building a new society in the shell of the old and for the workers to get ready to assume control of the industries they'd created out of their sweat and blood. When he said, "We stand for the one big union," there was a burst of cheering and clapping from all the wobblies in the hall. Fred Hoff nudged Mac as he clapped. "Let's raise the roof, Mac." The exploiting classes would be helpless against the solidarity of the whole working class. . . . Mac was in a glow all over and cheering to beat hell. He and Fred Hoff were cheering and the stocky Bohemian miner that smelt so bad next to them was clapping and the one-eyed Pole on the other side was clapping and the bunch of Wops were clapping and the little Jap who was waiter at the Montezuma Club was clapping and the six-foot ranchman who'd come in hopes of seeing a fight was clapping.

The alienated tone contributes to the all-over impact of the

book, which carries an almost overwhelming conviction of one's own impotence. There is nothing quite like this in American literature; a furious and documented cry of hatred against the oppressive forces in social life which is at the same time an emotional surrender to them. It gives us a clue to the subsequent turn of Dos Passos to the political Right, and the accompanying deterioration of his novelistic art.

If we recognize the artist's alienation as the force behind so much of what are called the modernistic or revolutionary movements in the arts of our times, then certain things become clear. On the one hand, this is not, as is often claimed, the return of art to fundamental principles that had been lost in the so-called humanist and realist perversion of art from the Renaissance on. It is not the art of the future. It is not the art of the "new reality", a counterpart to the discoveries of Einstein, atomic physicists, and the "new mathematics." It is an art tightly bound to the politics of its time—even though it renounces in theory any connection of art to society and politics.

But on the other hand, this art is not the product of willful perversity on the part of the artist, a deliberate refusal to produce "true" art, a desire to shock, annoy, or intrigue the audience with novelties, a result of bad lessons in the art schools, a sign of a new generation thumbing its nose at the old one. It is true that around the modern movements there have flocked many petty talents who hitch their wagon to the star of fashion, and don't mind its being a dead satellite if it brings them temporary recognition. It is also true that a lifeless metaphysical poetry, a dead-pan alienated prose treating of sex and violence, non-objective art and serial music have become in America today the most rigid of academies, more stifling than any academies against which the modern art movement first proclaimed its revolt. The modern "revolution" in the arts has very quickly become, in many of its aspects, the "new conservatism"; chilly and militantly anti-social. Yet the outstanding creative figures in these trends embody some of the finest talents of the age, working with consummate integrity, and their style represents the genuine feelings of the artist about life, a revelation of inner crisis when outer crises seem insoluble. To the extent that it is a moving art, it is never totally alienated, but rather represents a conflict between a human urge and an overwhelming sense of estrangement from the world and its people outside. Artistic

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alienation is not simply a matter of the artist finding some aspects of life strange to him. Rather it is, that what was once living and human has become estranged to him. He is at war with part of himself. His alienation is the wall behind which he seeks to recoup his freedom. He sees it as a defensive rampart. He can only be human through inhumanity. To ask a painter who feels this way, why he doesn't paint recognizable trees, flowers or human beings, is fruitless for even if he tried, the result would have the lifelessness of anything that doesn't arouse any ideas or excitement in him. Similarly, it is fruitless to ask a composer who makes an art of disjointed sounds and silences, to write a melodic line like Mozart or Schubert, or Gershwin or Bartok, for that would really be asking him to express in music an experience of human relationship, or state of life, of which he is not capable. Thus the composer John Cage says, quite honestly, "I have nothing to say and I am saying it." So it is with literature. Its subject matter and the approach to it are not arbitrary choices.

It is necessary of course to expose the self-serving theories about this alienated art, spun by critics more than artists, which have turned increasingly into publicity-mongering and have made a shambles of aesthetics itself. They have debased, distorted and misinterpreted the entire history and heritage of the arts to turn them into a tail or support of modern alienation. As a result, criticism, which traditionally deals with ideas, is debased into a reviewing that deals with marketplace appraisals, and so reviewing falls apart. There is hardly a critic who is certain that what he likes and understands is a good work or what he dislikes or is baffled by is a bad work. But the works of alienation themselves, with integrity and talent—and it is not impossible to discern these qualities—are part of history. The task of the critic is to see what forces brought this art about and what forces—including of course the will of the artist—could bring about a change.

The fact that an alienated style is not a matter of arbitrary choice on the part of the artist can be seen in the work of those who can create in both styles, of humanization and alienation. Let us take, for example, the opening of a story, *That Evening Sun,* by William Faulkner.

> Monday is no different from any other weekday in Jefferson now. The streets are paved now, and the telephone and elec-

tric companies are cutting down more and more of the shade trees—the water oaks, the maples and locusts and elms—to make room for iron poles bearing clusters of bloated and ghostly and bloodless grapes, and we have a city laundry which makes its rounds on Monday morning, gathering the bundles of clothes into bright-colored, specially-made motor cars: the soiled wearing of a whole week now flees apparition-like behind alert and irritable electric horns, with a long diminishing noise of asphalt and rubber like tearing silk, and even the Negro women who still take in white people's wash-ing after the old custom fetch and deliver it in automobiles.

But fifteen years ago, on Monday morning the quiet dusty, shady streets would be full of Negro women with balanced on their steady, turbaned heads, bundles of clothes tied up in sheets, almost as large as cotton bales, carried so without touch of hand between kitchen door of the white house and the blackened washpot beside a cabin door in Negro Hollow.

After the introductory short sentence, we have two long sentences, both in Faulkner's characteristic tone of voice. The first of these is colored by the imagery of alienation; "iron poles bearing clusters of bloated and ghostly and bloodless grapes," "alert and irritable electric horns," a "noise of rubber and asphalt like tearing silk." The second is in the imagery of humanization, like "quiet dusty, shady streets," "steady, turbaned heads." When Faulkner writes about the encroachment of business, machinery, capitalist "progress," upon the nostalgically remembered old ways of life, his hatred for the new dictates one kind of imagery, while his tenderness for the old dictates another kind of imagery.

Let us take Henry Miller. As he tells his story in *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn,* he has escaped from the "tread-mill" of life and won his freedom as a writer. But freedom, we learn, consists of being so hungry at times that he cannot think of anything but food, of living like a wolf on the prowl feeling all the world is his enemy, of doing hack writing and ghost writing, even writing publicity for a house of prostitution. He must seek his humanity by cutting himself off from society, and erecting a solid wall of callousness against it, cemented by vituperation. He has a lust for life, and a yearning for friendly human relations, but at the same time feels such relations as a trap, which might pin him to the world he wants to resign from. "People are like

lice," he says. "They get under your skin and bury themselves there." He must see love as a purely animal act because in its physical spasm he feels free, while to venture to see it in a more complex human relationship is to get involved in a world fearsome to him. And so he flits from a humanized to an alienated writing, as in these two passages about Paris, both from *Tropic of Cancer.*

> The rain had stopped and the sun breaking through the soapy clouds touched the glistening rubble of roofs with a cold fire. I recall now how the driver leaned out and looked up the river toward Passy way. Such a healthy, simple, approving glance, as if he were saying to himself; "Ah, spring is coming!" And God knows, when spring comes to Paris the humblest mortal alive must feel that he dwells in paradise.

The second:

> In the blue of an electric dawn the peanut shells look wan and crumpled; along the beach at Montparnasse the water lilies bend and break. When the tide is on the ebb and only a few syphilitic mermaids are left stranded in the muck, the Dôme looks like a shooting gallery that's been struck by a cyclone. Everything is slowly dribbling back to the sewer. For about an hour there is a deathlike calm during which the vomit is mopped up. Suddenly the trees begin to screech. From one end of the boulevard to the other a demented song rises up. It is like the signal that announces the close of the exchange. What homes there were are swept up. The moment has come to void the last bagful of urine. The day is sneaking in like a leper.

Miller might be said to connect the two post-war epochs. A writer who matured in the 1920's and 1930's, he became a cultural hero in the 1950's and early 1960's, when the ban that had long existed on the American publication of such books as *Tropic of Cancer* was lifted. As for the tone of alienation that has become so much the style in America in the 1950's and 1960's thus far, two examples will be given.

One is from a story, *A Change of Air* in a collection, *Nickel Miseries,* by Ivan Gold. The critic Lionel Trilling wrote that this is "one of the most moving stories I had ever read," and called the collection as a whole "masterly," promising that Ivan Gold will

become "one of the most commanding writers of our time." This passage is quite typical.

> Bobbie Bedner at the age of nineteen during the course of three warm August days and nights lost not her virginity which she had long before misplaced in the back of an automobile but the memory of it, and almost along with this, the capacity to remember. . . . What she could not possibly know when she got on the bus (which passed one park and two movie houses on its journey along an avenue of New York's lower East Side, but which also stopped almost directly outside the clubroom of the silk-jacketed Werewolves, membership thirty-five, and many friends) was that when she returned home seventy-two hours later she would do so minus her underwear, the greater part of her emotional stability, her future in the button factory, and eleven pounds.

This could be called witty writing, but it is not the wit of humanistic satire, like that of a Swift, a Daumier or Charlie Chaplin. In them, a mock-alienated imagery, caricature or burlesque is created with deliberate clues in its grotesquerie, that call upon the reader or onlooker to restore to the picture the missing humanity. Chaplin, shuffling about in baggy pants, seems to be a grotesquerie, an "oddball," a lone persecuted figure in a world where the real people, the smug and well-to-do, the police and officialdom, the hirers, connivers and manipulators, hold the reins of power in their hands. But we suddenly realize that it is he, made up as a clown, who is the real human being, who speaks for all of us, while the persecutors, the "real" people, are the unreal, in the sense that they are corrupted and inhuman, and are less triumphant, more baffled, than they think. Gold's humor, however, if it can be called that, serves only to deflate whatever "illusions" he thinks his readers have that there is humanity in the world. This degradation, animalism and stupidity, he says, is reality. Let us not shed tears.

The other who will be quoted is John Updike, whose novel *The Centaur* won the National Book Award in 1964. It is essentially the story of the death of a middle-aged schoolteacher in a small town; a gentle, kindly figure who has found the world about him bafflingly hard and cruel. This passage is typical of the alienated writing not only in this book, but suffusing Updike's preced-

ing novel, *Rabbit, Run.* It described the school gymnasium just before a basketball game.

> A panicked shout wells in the auditorium and lifts dust in the most remote rooms of the extensive school even while paying customers still stream through the entrance and down the glaring hall. Adolescent boys as hideous and various as gargoyles, the lobes of their ears purple with the cold, press, eyes popping, mouths flapping, under the glowing overhead globes. Girls, rosy-cheeked, glad, motley and mostly ill-made, like vases turned by a preoccupied potter, are embedded, plaid-swaddled, in the hot push. Menacing, odorous, blind, the throng gives off a muted shuffling thunder, a flickeringly articulate tinkle; the voices of the young.

The counterforce to alienation is not theory alone but a way of life. When people join together for their common welfare, they discover the humanity of both others and themselves. Thus Marx writes:

> When communist workmen associate with one another, theory, propaganda, etc., is their first end. But at the same time, as a result of this association they acquire a new need—the need for society—and what appears as a means becomes an end. You can observe this practical process in its most splendid results whenever you see French socialist workers together. Such things as smoking, drinking, eating, etc., are no longer means of contact or means that bring together. Association and conversation, which has society as its end, are enough for them; the brotherhood of man is no mere phrase with them, but a fact of life, and the nobility of man shines upon us from their work-hardened bodies.

Here is a passage from John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath,* which not only is humanized writing but embodies this same thought.

> One man, one family driven from the land; this rusty car creaking along the highway to the west. I lost my land, a single tractor took my land. I am alone and I am bewildered. And in the night one family camps in a ditch and another

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family pulls in and the tents come out. The two men squat on their hams and the women and children listen. Here is the node, you who hate change and fear revolution. Keep these two squatting men apart; make them hate fear, suspect each other. . . . For here "I lost my land" is changed; a cell is split and from the splitting grows the thing you hate—"We lost *our* land." The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one. And from this first "we" there grows a still more dangerous thing: "I have a little food" plus "I have none." If from this problem the sum is "We have a little food," the thing is on its way, the movement has direction. . . . . The two men squatting in a ditch, the little fire, the side-meat stewing in a single pot, the silent, stone-eyed women; behind, the children listening with all their souls to words their minds do not understand. The night draws down. The baby has a cold. Here, take this blanket. Its wool. It was my mother's blanket—take it for the baby. This is the thing to bomb. This is the beginning—from "I" to "we."

The essence of art is the humanization of reality. Alienated art is art announcing the coming death of art; the end of a process of increasing confinement of the area in which the artist can find his humanity. The flickering of subjective pathos within it keeps it from being altogether dead. When this burns out in the alienated artist's work, what he produces is dead art. Dead art can have all sorts of remarkable qualities. Clever critics can write brilliant, impressive analyses of their formal subtleties, and stylistic refinement, while dismissing with scorn the work of other artists who cannot match these subtleties, who are even crude, actually crude, but who produce live art, not dead.

Stravinsky's music for the past twenty years—what I have heard of it—seems to me for the most part admirable in its craftsmanship, but dead. The American music being written today by John Cage, Morton Feldman, and others of their school, which prides itself on its indefiniteness, permitting each performance to be different within the general framework set by the composer, is music admitting its own death. For whatever improvisation it permits is only a flicker of life in a constructed prison; it leaves nothing that speaks to another generation. T. S. Eliot's last major poem, *Four Quartets*, is to me largely dead poetry full of admirable craft touches, with but here and there a flicker of life, when Eliot speaks

frankly of his own loneliness, his despair at having nothing to say. His late succession of plays seems to me to be almost dead art. There is not a character in any one of them who emerges to a living human being. The art of the abstract-expressionist Jackson Pollock, is kept from being dead art by a subjective flicker. What he "humanizes" is only paint and canvas. The painting replaces his "environment." Much art that has followed him in this style, I think, is dead art. The cult of "pop art," which isolates out of its commercial context a can of beans, a trade-marked carton, a frame from a comic strip, is dead art, with an ironic smirk on its face as it lies in its coffin.

The spread of alienation in the arts of the United States does not mean that many artists have embraced political reaction. They remain independent minds looking critically at the world about them. What is alarming is that this attitude of alienation seems to indicate that these artists have accepted as inevitable a drift to American fascism, or proto-fascism; the kind of fascism prefigured by the murderers going about scot free in Mississippi, the poverty and misery of the South Korean people under American "liberation," the savagery with which the heavy arsenal of American weaponry is being used to massacre the people of South Vietnam on their own land.

The artist does not love this situation but he bows his head to it, and within the wall of his alienation, detaches himself from it. His hands are clean. The people are stupid, or corrupted. But there is a tradition for this attitude too. Human society has consistently made progress. This progress, however, has not been one of a gradual rise. Rather, it has taken the form of great leaps forward. In between each of these leaps has come a crisis. And at the moment of crisis, it has always seemed to a host of lamenters that there has never been progress at all, that humanity has never advanced beyond the cave age.

IV.

THE IMAGERY OF ALIENATION

Howard D. Langford

"Look here upon this picture and on this:
Have you eyes?"
(Hamlet, III, 4)

I.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

In Nathanael West's novelette, *Miss Lonelyhearts*,[1]* the central character, a newspaper reporter, accepts, more or less as a lark to begin with, an assignment to answer letters from correspondents asking for help through his paper's agony column. The letters soon excite his sympathy, however, to the extent that he makes a long-continued and uniformly frustrating effort to help these unfortunates. He tries human sympathy, religion, psychiatry, love, and sex—with uniformly negative results, and ends by getting himself shot to death by a cripple whom he has been trying to help, and who completely misunderstands Miss Lonelyhearts' motives.

Miss Lonelyhearts' correspondents were all, of course, in their various ways, victims of alienation—lonely or otherwise unhappy people to whom society had denied their varying goals of self-realization. These diverse goals, however ill-conceived or ill-defined, were all *images* of what they wanted, images which certainly figured in their letter-writing and in their subsequent dealings with Miss Lonelyhearts.

And Miss Lonelyhearts, in his well-intentioned but unfortunate ministrations to these people, leading to his ignominious end, also had in *his* mind an image of the remedy (as he hoped) for their several ills. The only trouble was that the image—the vision—of what each of these persons hoped to receive, and the image of what

* References will be found at the conclusion of this chapter.

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their lay psychiatrist proposed to give them, just didn't correspond. And the effect of this lack of correspondence was to leave each of them as badly off as before, and poor Miss Lonelyhearts much worse off.

Miss Lonelyhearts, in his sincere but bumbling attempts to help these people, represented, in his peculiar way, society's interest in helping them. And even if what Miss Lonelyhearts tried to do for them had been attempted by a variety of individuals or agencies, each of these—whether a minister, or a social worker, or a psychiatrist, or a police officer, or a would-be lover—would have acted with reference to an image of what his sector of society would consider an appropriate goal of his endeavor. And the degree of success in each case would probably depend to a considerable extent upon the degree of correspondence between the outlook of society's representative and the expectations of the individual needing the help.

I hasten to assure the reader that the images referred to in this case of Miss Lonelyhearts are not to be thought of as entities in their own right; they are *formulations,* the like of which inevitably emerge whenever people face problems and the effort to solve them. Such images might be called goals-in-mind. And goals, whether in the mind or otherwise, are notoriously subject to being missed or having to be reformulated by the seeker.

Furthermore, Miss Lonelyhearts and the people he tried to help were all characters in a novel apparently designed to present a picture—an image, if you will—of the futility of trying to help the helpless by any of the means used by Miss Lonelyhearts. It holds, in fact, a mirror up to the futility of the do-gooder. It seems to say, in the total picture presented in the novelette, that if people like the writers of these letters—signed variously as Sick-of-it-All, Desperate, etc.—are to be helped, it won't be by such expedients as were tried out here. The book could, conceivably, have some effect in motivating people sincerely interested in finding solutions for such problems to seek a more effective way of solving them. Or it could have the effect of confirming some sceptical readers in the conviction that such people as the writers of these letters couldn't be helped by any type of social action and that such people, like the poor, would be with us always.

The case of Miss Lonelyhearts has been dealt with at some length to bring out two points with which this paper will be

concerned: 1. that in facing life people do so with more or less clear images in mind as to what they want; and 2. that the images on which these individuals act are countered by images which society has engendered as to the needs of those calling for assistance—images which may be favorable or unfavorable to the self-realization of people needing help.

A third point may well be noted: that, in view of our concern with doing something about alienation and not merely describing it, the distinction should be made between the *form* of an image encountered in life or in art and the *effect* of the image in promoting or counteracting alienation.

The three points brought out through the case of Miss Lonelyhearts are amply illustrated in factual or fictional presentations of many sides of life in the United States, of which two further examples will be mentioned here.

Michael Harrington, in *The Other America*,[2] presents a factual study of widespread alienation with the impact of powerful fiction. He estimates, from government sources, that there are between 40 and 50 million poor in the United States—the world's richest nation. They are to be found not only in these vast numbers, but in widely diverse, if often coincidental groups, from the unemployed miners, sharecroppers, and migratory workers in the rural areas to the host of unorganized city workers—hotel employees, bus boys, dishwashers, laundry workers, unskilled factory hands, and domestics; and in city and country alike there are the old, the sick in body and spirit, the young children growing up in cheerless slums, the teen-agers without hope. Of the poor, Harrington says, "Everything about them, from the condition of their teeth to the way in which they make love, is suffused and permeated by the fact of their poverty."

Their poverty, moreover, has become established—as "a culture, an institution, a way of life." The American poor have become "a nation within a nation," recalling the picture of nineteenth-century England in Disraeli's novel, *Sybil*. Could Disraeli's leading character, who gave the book its title, have been thought of by its versatile author as a literary reincarnation of the demi-goddess who admitted Aeneas to the underworld, and whose leaves foretold the future? She might well have figured, in any case, as the presiding spirit at Harrington's glimpse at *his* underworld; she might well

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have become the inspiration of his implied prophecy.

An especially distressing feature of this American poverty is that its victims are so largely ignored because they are so largely unknown. They are the "invisible" poor. What they need, Harrington thinks, is "an American Dickens to record and smell the texture and quality of their lives," to present the complex and compelling image of these submerged millions under the "cycles and trends, the massive forces" which press them down.

Harrington's picture of our invisible poor carries its own powerful impression, however, especially in comparison with that presented in a *Fortune* article based on the same research studies as Harrington's. The writer in *Fortune* had focussed his attention on the achievements of the American middle class, overlooking the group at the bottom, whereas Harrington was frankly concerned with the condition of this long-neglected fraction of the nation.

My own immediate purpose is not to arouse indignation, as Harrington frankly implies his purpose to be, but simply to draw attention to these contradictory over-all images of our society, and to have my readers note Harrington's observation that acceptance of the optimistic image presented in the *Fortune* article could have the effect of leaving the invisible poor in their invisible poverty.

They constitute a massive problem, Harrington says, which concerns "people who are immunized from progress and who view technical advance upside down." They comprise, in short, a vast and growing mass of alienated people, "a monstrous example of needless suffering in the most advanced society in the world."

And if we may be permitted to spell out the logic of Harrington's *The Other America*, one need of these submerged millions is a new and more positive and unsentimental *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, an uncompromising imaginative analysis of their society and the part they have been forced to play in it—an analysis clear enough, and stirring enough, to arouse the nation—including these millions themselves—to turn the present brush-war on poverty into a full-scale peaceful offensive to wipe poverty from the face of the land.

From another view of the American scene it becomes apparent, however, that the more fortunate minions of our way of life are themselves not immune to the blight of alienation. Henry James, in a side of his writings too frequently overlooked by critics of his

alleged snobbery, presented an impressive series of characters alienated through their very advantages, and particularly through their money.

And recently Betty Friedan presented *The Feminine Mystique*,[3] defined by Mrs. Friedan as the image of woman's role which has been presented through the advertising media to American women, and widely accepted by them, especially during the past fifteen years. "Millions of women," she says, have

> lived their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban housewife, kissing their husbands good-bye in front of the picture window, depositing their station-wagonsful of chldren at school, and smiling as they run the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor.

This picture, Mrs. Friedan goes on to say, has given rise to a widespread and deeply-disturbing problem of alienation. Many American women, she finds, are beginning to feel desperate (like one of Miss Lonelyhearts' correspondents who thus signed herself) . A young mother consulted by Mrs. Friedan complained bitterly that she had begun to feel that she had no personality. She had become, she said, merely "a server of food and putter on of pants and a bedmaker," merely someone "to be called on when you want something."

Among the age-old panaceas recommended by active proponents of the Feminine Mystique are: "love is the answer," and "to cure this toothache of the spirit—the simple formula of handing one's self and one's will over to God." Such formulas, too, recall the unprofitable expedients applied by Miss Lonelyhearts in his unfruitful effort to set the world right. According to Mrs. Friedan such formulas are now more commonly rejected with anger than followed with thanks.

A psychiatrist in a marriage counseling clinic says, by way of diagnosing the trouble, that woman has been made a sex creature, "with no identity except as wife and mother." Mrs. Friedan's researches have led her to the conclusion—asserted in no uncertain terms—that women have been building themselves comfortable concentration camps, out of which they are now trying desperately to emerge.

As a counter-image to that of the feminine mystique, which Mrs.

Friedan believes "prescribes . . . a living death for women . . . the slow death of the self," she presents woman as a full participant, along with men, in the serious work of the world. This does not mean mere part-time dabbling in art or immersing one's self in a welter of community activities. It can mean the lifelong commitment to an art or science, to politics or a profession; "and it must mean full participation along with the men in concern for great questions, which recent studies have shown to be one of the defining characteristics of human health."

It is clear from Mrs. Friedan's writing, and from the wide interest aroused through her book, that the problem of alienation, from the woman's angle at least, is a serious matter. And what Mrs. Friedan has been saying about the women probably applies in many respects with equal force to the men. It seems clear, also, that the two sharply-contrasting images here presented are likely to have considerable effect, whether in guiding the efforts of women who have learned to recognize and to break away from the feminine mystique through reading Mrs. Friedan's book, or in confirming the stand of women too deeply committed in their role as housewives and mothers to admit the importance, or even the existence, of the problem.

The foregoing discussion of the problem of alienation as affecting two groups crucial in American society leads us to the consideration of a third group, which may turn out to be equally crucial, to which alienation in severe and diverse forms has long been an ever-present problem, namely the Negro people.

II.

HOW WE SEE THE OTHERS

The feeling of alienation in the sense of non-acceptance is presented in Ralph Ellison's novel, *The Invisible Man*[4] to the point where his central character all but loses his identity as a human being. Yet many of the favored middle-class women in Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* complained of a somewhat comparable loss. This and allied forms of alienation are harshly illustrated, especially as bugbears of the American Negro, in Ellison's book and in the bitter frustrations of the young musician in Baldwin's *Another Country*.[5] The frustrations are evident in Baldwin's book not only in his central character's relation to the

Whites, but in the relations of the Whites with each other, the whole thing adding up to a seemingly endless series of unhappy love relationships—marital, extra-marital, or homosexual—varied only by like frustrations in art or industry.

In these respects the Negroes portrayed by Ellison and Baldwin, while the rigors of their situation were aggravated by their "racial" difficulties, shared the miseries of alienation with an imposing list of characters, many of them white, represented in the fiction and drama of the past two or three decades.

Several of these works—to name them in the order in which they suggest themselves rather than in historical sequence—would be: Cozzens' novel, *By Love Possessed;* Tennessee Williams' plays: *The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire,* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof;* Jones' novel, *From Here to Eternity,* and of course Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead;* Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms, The Sun Also Rises,* and *The Old Man and the Sea;* Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby;* and O'Neill's play, *The Iceman Cometh.* Farther back in time would be Eliot's "The Waste Land" and "The Hollow Men," and a number of his plays, including *Murder in the Cathedral,* and *The Cocktail Party,* and our list would include such recent psychological screen plays as *The Silence,* in which two women, and a little boy, and an old man, are all shown as more or less hopelessly alienated individuals. These, and many more recent novels and short stories and poems and plays, as well as non-fictional works such as those discussed earlier in this paper, point to the conclusion that alienation, while it may impinge with especial severity on the Negro, may be doing so for reasons other than "racial," seeming to be characteristic, rather, of our whole society, at least in this historical period.

Mention should be made, here, also, of certain goals which the American Negro has been setting for himself. He seems to have been pushing aside one barrier to his happiness only to encounter others. Frazier, in his *Black Bourgeoisie,*[6] presents a picture of the adoption (conscious or unconscious) , by many of the more advantaged Negroes, of goals long associated with the White middle class—goals in the form of individual success in business or the professions, an early image of which appeared in Franklin's *Autobiography,* which have latterly tended to become the rewards of bitterly competitive striving for wealth and prestige.

Frazier's principal point is that the American Negro, in his

preoccupation with achieving middle-class goals (in becoming assimilated with the white middle class, and thus overcoming his alienation from American "society") has tended to cut himself off from his less fortunate brethren of color, has tended to think of these (as the Whites had in practice long regarded *their* poor) as hopelessly backward—a permanently alienated class.

Now according to the view presented by Harrington and others, the white middle class, despite its phenomenal achievements, is discovering that its very successes have brought serious problems in their train—mounting unemployment and poverty, for example, and the portentous threats of inflation and depression.

Frazier's thesis, when spelled out, leads to the conclusion that the Black Bourgeoisie may find itself triply alienated—never fully accepted in this predominantly white man's economy, separated by class barriers from the less privileged Negro majority, and subject, along with the less affluent, less powerful sector of the white middle class, to the growing crisis of the enterprise system. Which leads us to consideration of alienation on broader ranges than the "racial" (in America) or even the national.

The question implied in Frazier's thesis as to how the American Negro may best hope to achieve self-realization is variously dealt with in papers read at the First Conference of Negro Writers, held in March, 1959. Discussion was focussed, at the Conference, upon estimating the extent to which the Negro intellectual should seek to merge himself in the American culture, whether in doing so completely he might not run the risk of betraying

> not only his own future possibilities in the United States, but more importantly his potential cultural and spiritual contri-bution to humanity by fixing in his mind a pattern of his role as a subordinate part of a greater whole, a whole which has traditionally denied him dignity and his full stature as a human being.

Samuel W. Allen, (from whose paper on "Négritude and its relevance to the American Negro Writer," the preceding quotation is taken) defines Négritude as "a type of reconnaisance in the forma-tion of a new imaginative world free from the proscriptions of a racist West,"—as an effort to renew the African's "lost organic vision of the universe." The term has emerged, Allen says, because of the denial to the Negro of "an acceptable identity in Western

culture," and may well be given serious consideration by the American Negro before he makes a "too eager, too anxious, too precipitous jump into what is termed the mainstream of that culture." "It might not be entirely fruitless," he thinks, to go back for a moment in our cultural reconnaissance—to go back [symbolically—H.D.L.] to Guinea."

The Conference delegates were inclined to scout as groundless "the fear that the Negro's roots will be obliterated by a white society." Yet let us suppose that the Negroes in America may finally "reach that stage in which we can look at segregation in the same way that historians now regard the Inquisition or the Hitler era in Germany," as one delegate hopefully predicts. The choice may still be before the American Negroes (insofar as it is a choice) between a social structure like that of Brazil and one like that of Hawaii. This latter idea has been brought out by St. Claire Drake,[8] the widely-travelled Chicago sociologist, who thinks we are heading for the Hawaii type of society, in which "ethnic groups have not disappeared," a society in which, if you intermarry, you simply pick, without qualm or shame, "which side you are going to be on."*

* Drake's favorable view of the Hawaiian alternative for the future of the Negro in the United States is confirmed to a degree in James Mitchener's admirable novel, *Hawaii*. Hawaiian statehood may prove to be a first step in a refurbishing of the American image of the needs and capacities of wider and more varied groups than the American Negro.

That the Caucasian image of the non-Caucasians as equal human beings has not always been so enlightened is amply demonstrated by Mitchener in his account of early missions in Hawaii, and of the shipping and real-estate and pineapple interests there, and the political agents of all these. Far from such an enlightened picture is that which Mitchener himself presents of the irresponsible assorted Caucasian freebooters of the Pacific in his *Rascals in Paradise*,[46] or that of the self-destroying tiny brush war of the would-be dominant Whites against the Polynesians in the antipodean Shangri-la of Pitcairn's Island.[47]

It is not without significance that Drake, as a leading American Negro sociologist, writing in 1964 about the present trials and future hopes of the Negroes in America, should look to the recently-emerged image of Hawaii, which is America and yet not America of the very recent past. But Mark Twain, some sixty years earlier, saw clearly, as Foner points out, "the relationship between the suppression of freedom for the Filipinos and for the Negro in the United States." And Mark Twain's view of our role in the Philippines—linked as it was in his mind with our treatment of the Negro at home—applied with equal force to all the imperialisms of his time, that is, on a world scale. It applied especially to the Belgian monarch of the Congo for his ample share in the killing of the scores of millions of Africans done to death during the centuries of slavery and colonial oppression.

Such are the roots—can they ever be overlooked by White or Black?—of our current Negro revolution, and of the world revolution of all the oppessed peoples, of which it is part and parcel.

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Drake prefers this development (toward which he thinks we are heading) to the situation in Brazil, in which emphasis had been laid on the attainment of one race, "and particularly toward the eradication of all evidences of African culture."

> . . . that's a part of what integration means in Brazil. Eradicate the blacks by marrying with them; get rid of the color, then quickly get them educated and get rid of this African survival system.

If Drake has run the risk here of a certain over-simplification in his description of Brazilian planning, one may readily concur in his failure to regard Brazil "as any paradise for one who has respect for his Africanism, "—or indeed, one might add, after a look at the startling film titled *Brazil: The Rude Awakening*,[9] and a glance at the diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus,[10] that Drake could be forgiven for failing to find in contemporary Brazil, for the majority of former Negroes, however thoroughly integrated, residential and cultural advantages representing any great improvement on Dante's Inferno.

Drake's discussion of the Brazilian-Hawaian alternatives for the American Negro suggests, however, an even more thought-provoking pair of alternative images, involving not only Black and White, but all intermediate native hues.

This set of alternatives, far from being merely theoretical, is the irrevocable actual outcome of the globe-circling, globe-shrinking achievements of Western technology combined with the equally astonishing mushroom rise of the new free or autonomous states in Africa and Asia, with the pyramiding power in the United Nations and the world in general of this bloc of nations, backed on many crucial issues by the far from inconsequential socialist countries.

The choice here (if it be a choice) is between the image of a world composed of independent nation-states, with a few of the strongest striving for dominance over all the rest, and the image of an emerging world commonwealth of partner peoples, approaching equality of economic and cultural development through a global order of mutual respect and mutual aid. The necessity to choose between these alternatives may turn out to be of crucial concern, especially for the American Negro. Is he prepared to

stand, now, solidly behind the concept and program of our current era as "the American century," the concept so ably and forcefully proclaimed through *Life* magazine in 1950, and still a basic premise of our foreign policy? Or is he beginning to read the signs, which now appear day by day in his newspaper and on his television screen, that the hey-day of the dominant nation-state—any nation-state—is about over?

Two pieces of writing (of 1957 and 1964 respectively) may be of interest in this connection.

Harry S. Ashmore, a Southern white journalist, evidently concerned that the United States should present a solid front to the world, voices, in his *Epitaph for Dixie*,[11] his conviction that Southern racism, as a system, is dead, and that the Nation must act now as a solid unit in assuring equal rights, equal opportunity, to all American citizens.

He feels, however, that Negro intellectuals in America are making a mistake in trying to establish "a sort of mystic identification with the anti-colonial revolution now racking so much of the world, equating the destiny of American Negroes with that of Orientals and Moslems." He believes that the Negro intellectual here, in any discussion of the American Negro's problems, "would find far more common ground with Herman Talmadge than he would with Pandit Nehru." Presumably Ashmore's observation would apply, also, to the American Negro's relation to the new African states and their leaders. The future of the American Negro, Ashmore says in effect, is his future as an American.

In the second piece of writing, a young Negro staff-sergeant on duty on a Pacific island shows sharp awareness of recent violence against members of his "race" and of the "winds of the Negro revolution" [in U.S.A.—H.D.L.] which have been blowing across the globe. Deeply conscious of close friends he has known who were not of his "race," he hopes and believes that "the chords of our living will blend into a harmony that sings the greatness of America."[12]

He is deeply conscious that his "race" is engaged in "a great fight to secure first-class citizenship," that "the freedom for which we are fighting" springs from the laws of the land, which "give us the right to fight." He feels, however, "that there are those of us who must make contributions to the higher cause so that all the other causes will not lose their meaning." He is serving with the

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Armed Forces to preserve "the heritage of freedom."

Ashmore, the liberal white journalist, would probably find himself in close agreement with the Staff-Sergeant in identifying service to the Nation as the cause comprehending all other causes and giving them meaning. For Ashmore, as for the Staff-Sergeant, service to the Nation in defense of freedom would be an ultimate consideration.

It would be interesting to learn how these two writers, respectively, would respond if confronted with the reality implied behind an incident reported by Julian Mayfield, another participant in the First Conference of Negro Writers.

> Recently an African student, long resident in this country, confessed to a group of his intimates that he did not trust the American Negro. "What will you do," he asked them, "in the unlikely event that the United States becomes involved in a colonial war in Africa?" The immediate answer was: "Man, we will shoot you down like dogs."

Mayfield reports that the "remark prompted general laughter," but that he found it, on reflection, "not amusing."

The Staff-Sergeant and Ashmore, being both thoughtful people, if confronted with the contingency posed in this story, might both be expected to share to some extent, the sobering afterthought of Mayfield, if not the distrust of American Negroes expressed by the student from Africa. But if the Staff-Sergeant were actually called upon to fight in Africa, against whom, or what, would he probably be defending his nation? If the Korean war and our present involvement in South Vietnam may be taken as precedents, it is probable that he would be called on to help defend the "free world" against "communism,"—that is, to prevent the setting up of a state following, or modelled after, the type of program exemplified by the U.S.S.R. or the People's Republic of China.

Now socialism, according to the prevailing American image, is the antithesis of democracy and freedom. According to this familiar image it is closely synonymous either with the serpent in Eden or with cancer or some other deadly disease, and its advocates are regarded as disseminators of disease germs.

So it is not surprising that Americans who accept this image of socialism are somewhat reluctant to give their whole-hearted sup-

port to policies favoring peaceful co-existence. You don't peacefully co-exist with cobras or cancer or cholera. In a contest with any of these killers you either win or go under. And yet peaceful co-existence, in one form or another, is being urged today in our highest official circles, as the means of avoiding a nuclear war which would obviously be pretty ruinous for everybody—East, West, North, and South.

Most African and Asian countries, moreover, are actually committed to some form of socialism, and other states of the same two continents and in Latin America (not to speak of the Caribbean)' could quite possibly turn in that direction. These facts are generally conceded by responsible leaders of the Western nations, including the United States.

This means that according to a less familiar image which seems to be emerging, socialism is being at least partly recognized as a program of social organization thinkable as an *alternative* to Western democracy, to be tolerated if not fully accepted. It means, furthermore, that for anyone to accept and act upon the still-prevalent American view will be to fly in the face of what an impressive majority of the world's population—far more than all the Western populations put together—believe in and work for. The countries committed to socialism identify it in terms of this new image; to them it means freedom.

So the hypothetical dilemma of the Negro Staff-Sergeant in being asked to shoot down Africans resolves itself, at this point, into the broader and more fundamental question as to what it means today to defend freedom.

Alienation, as the situation of the American Negro and other groups in the U.S.A. amply proves, can afflict not only individuals but large groups of people, even whole populations subject to common disabilities. Examination of further cases may disclose possible reasons for the alienation of such groups. And if earlier passages in this paper are valid, such cases may also help to show what images tend to impose or perpetuate alienation, and what images support the hopes and direct the efforts of groups seeking to free themselves from its crippling limitations.

I would like to draw attention now to two further series of writings, which show the effectiveness of both factual reporting and imaginative fiction in illustrating the diverse images dealt with here.

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Ralph Korngold, in his historical novel, *Citizen Toussaint*,[13] portrays the astonishing career of his central character as the emancipator (for a time) of the much-oppressed people of Haiti—a leader so great as to arouse the implacable jealousy of Napoleon, as a threat to his imperial destiny. Korngold's book is referred to here less to recall Toussaint's victories over the Spanish, British, and French forces sent to destroy him than to keep on record the deception used by Napoleon to bring his Haitian rival to ruin. Toussaint was trapped through a ruse engineered by a French general who, as Toussaint had been led to believe, had come to negotiate with him. Captured and carried off to France, he was confined in a French prison under conditions which led, before many months, to his death.

Napoleon's treatment of Toussaint was no doubt deplored by many persons in the new American Republic, as it was by Wordsworth in his well-known sonnet. Yet according to Wolff's recent study, *Little Brown Brother*,[14] and the account in *American Heritage*,[15] the same expedient was used under American auspices some hundred years later to defeat the Philippine independence movement led by Emilio Aguinaldo.

The traps set for Toussaint and Aguinaldo were both prepared by the leaders of nation-states to suppress independence movements in what they treated in law or in fact as their colonies, and both moves were directed against regimes which were basically middle-class. The entire American campaign in the Philippines was bitterly attacked by William Vaughn Moody in his poetry, and by Mark Twain in shattering satire. Yet General Frederick Funston, who planned and effected the capture of Aguinaldo, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Benjamin Appel, in his novel *Fortress in the Rice*,[16] tells how, some forty-four years after we took possession of the Islands, and twelve years after we had granted them independence (in 1933), they were liberated from their Japanese invaders by the American armed forces. This action led to the setting up of the Republic of the Philippines in 1946. It also led to the disarming (at the time of the liberation) of an independent peasant resistance movement which began before the Japanese invasion and was finally suppressed by the Philippine army (with American material support) some years after the end of World War II.

What bearing have these circumstances on alienation?

One of the chief grievances of the Philippine peasants has to do with the arbitrary control of the land and its products exercised by the large-scale planters. It was because of the exactions of the landlords that the peasants turned to revolt, which they began by holding back rice from the landlords long before the arrival of the Japanese. The rice became at once the symbol and the citadel of their resistance to the landlords, and eventually to the Japanese, providing Appel with the title of his novel.

The revolt of the peasants was not primarily political. It had its origin in their hunger for the land, and for the better life the land could bring them if the land were theirs. Their image of the land and its possibilities—the image of the "good earth"—was much the same as that before the eyes of the myriad peasants of China, who were soon, with that image in mind, to turn to communism, and those of India, who until now have followed the images set for them by Gandhi and Nehru.

And while, for the peasants of the Philippines, the land and its fruits were the immediate objects of their revolt, they were striving for more than these; they were fighting not the landlords and the Japanese alone, but the system which had deprived them, and would deprive their children, of needed food, livable housing, health, education—the decencies of life. They were struggling against their long alienation from these, with a new image in mind which some of their leaders had inspired them with—the belief that they need no longer yield to fate as an inexorable force, but could, to a significant extent, make their own fate, through mastering, within their limitations, the conditions of a better life.

They were faced with much the same barriers to self-realization as Harrington's "invisible poor," except that to us, an ocean farther west, they were more invisible. They suffered under the added disadvantage of being more readily ignored, of being more readily mergeable into the romantic scenery of a remote and exotic land, to which distance, and travel prospectuses, and the charm of the primitive may lend a meretricious, narcotic enchantment. They failed; but the story of their failure is more heartening than the querulous excuse offered by a character in a recent screen play for his incessant and in the end abysmally boring dissipations, that after all "the whole world is decaying all around us."

Serious writers of high-level fiction must write of what they see

and feel, not present a prettified view of harsh realities. But is our actual outlook so uniformly drab as so many of our abler writers have found it to be this generation long? We have causes today for which young and old, great and obscure, have been willing to die— have died in substantial numbers. We have dragons in the land to challenge our courage, more hideous, more flesh-consuming than any faced and slain by the most resolute of Red Cross knights. Why, then, is our current literature of the imagination—with a handful of exceptions—so sparse in saints and heroes? Where are the Don Quixotes, the Tom Joneses of these sad and sapless Sixties? Why must our poets be bearded sphinxes that everybody reads and nobody understands, our fictional heroes fight

> *Their bloodiest Marathons—and Waterloos*
> *In beds, and bars, and barbecues?*

—with so much going on outside? Why must our dramas echo and re-echo the lugubrious chant of ancestral Cassandras prophesying perpetual drought? Maybe our contemporary Dickenses and Tennysons and Melvilles and Whitmans have been too busy catching in their imaginative nets the rapidly-receding past or the bitter present. Are sharks the only fish in the sea around us? Couldn't they manage an occasional eel, or even a lowly oyster, irritably secreting a pearl or two?

My point is not so much what our writers see, but what they fail to see—their human weaknesses for producing saleable articles and eating regularly, their vulnerability to ordeal by slander. But more than this, I am concerned with the *effects* of so much pessimism on the minds and spirits of the alienated, who already have about as much of it—direct from life—as they can take. Such preoccupations as that of the cankered movie character, with his cheerless monotone—"the very painting" of his fears—sometimes lead one to wonder whether the West, as Spengler glumly predicted, may not be leading into some gigantic tailspin. Must we, for the alleviation of our frenetic anxieties, turn for relaxation or reflection to more and more fantastic, more and more distracting spectacles of folly and frustration? May we look only to the Far East and the Far South—to Asia and Africa in their travail—for realistic vision and reasonable hope?

Perhaps our writers—and writing a substantial work of the

imagination is a slow and agonizing ordeal—have yet to catch up to today's incredible tempo of change. Is it unreasonable to expect them to *anticipate* some favorable changes? Or would so brash a thought pose too sharp a contradiction to the prevailing picture of contemporary life as hopeless or meaningless? If the people of today are to regain their lost vision, through whom may they hope to gain it except through the dreamers? And through those among the dreamers, moreover, able to evoke, amid present perplexities, not the fantasies of an irrevocable, romanticized past, but the vision of a painfully emerging but more humane future.

To bring more awareness of this kind of vision to dreamers capable of responding to it and translating it into intelligible forms of art is, I think, one of the greatest challenges and opportunities of A.I.M.S.

The case of the two American campaigns in the Philippines seems to show that whether the indicated aim was to assist destiny in making the United States a world power, or (as it would now be put) to assure the defense of the free world from communist aggression, the result in either case was to bring the Islands into the position of a dependency, political or economic, of the ascendent nation-state. It was to leave them either in direct possession of an outside power or in the hands of a Philippine government unmistakably (as it would seem) responsive to the wishes of that power. It was to leave the Philippines in the actual position of an American colony.

Now even as late as 1945, the empires of the West (except for the late domain of the Czars, and the ephemeral powers of Mussolini and Hitler) were still intact, and the ever-growing majority of newly-freed present members of the United Nations was still little more than a gleam in the eye of Shridharani,[17] and the People's Republic of China not even that.

But in view of the kaleidoscopic transformation of the British and French and Dutch empires, and the ever-lengthening roster of independent or autonomous states which have taken their place, it may be interesting to devote some attention to three recent books dealing with some of the developments in South East Asia, one of the world's most troubled regions.

Graham Greene, in his thoughtful novel, *The Quiet American*, presents an imaginative picture of the situation in Vietnam shortly before the French withdrawal. The story is told by Fowler, a

middle-aged British reporter. Pyle, the "quiet American," is a young man, the son of a New England professor, who has been sent on a secret mission to Saigon. Pyle takes over Fowler's Vietnamese sweetheart for a time, with the journalist's bitter acquiescence, since Pyle has said he will marry her, whereas Fowler is not in a position to do so. But in his naive pursuit of his mission the quiet American becomes involved with a certain General Thé, the possible organizer of a Third Force, which might, with timely American aid, bring "democracy" to the East. Pyle ends his part of the mission by getting himself stabbed and thrown into the river.

One night when Fowler and Pyle were caught in a watch-tower under constant threat of Viet Minh attack, they got into an argument.

"You and your like," said Fowler, "are trying to make a war with the help of people who just aren't interested."

"They don't want communism," Pyle said; and Fowler answered:

"They want enough rice. . . . They don't want to be shot at. . . . They don't want our white skins around telling them what they want."

Pyle expressed his concern about the importance of the individual.

"Why have we only just discovered it" Fowler asked. "Forty years ago no one talked that way."

"It wasn't threatened then," Pyle said; and Fowler replied:

> "Ours wasn't threatened, oh no, but who cared about the individuality of the man in the paddy field—and who does now? The only man to treat him as a man is the political commissar. He'll sit in his hut and ask his name and listen to his complaints; he'll give up an hour a day to teach him—it doesn't matter what, he's being treated like a man, like someone of value. . . ."

Some years later, by the time Eugene Burdick and William Lederer wrote *The Ugly American,* the French had left Vietnam, and the Americans had realized their hope of being in a position to bring "democracy" to South-East Asia. These authors thoroughly approve the presence of the U.S.A. in that region. But they

are much disturbed at the ignorance or ineptitude of some of the American diplomatic and other representatives, who live on a lavish scale, and associate with the South-East Asians (when they do associate) only when these are important officials and business-men, and channel American aid too largely to the army, and to showy and expensive building and transportation projects instead of getting down to the grass roots.

To the surprise of the authors, the book became at once a best seller, and seems to have alerted many Americans—including some responsible Washington officials—to the current inadequacies of our foreign emissaries. Most significant for the purpose of this paper, however, was the concern evident in the book for having the Americans shift the whole emphasis of their program in that region to aiding the ordinary people to improve their day-to-day lives by simple, inexpensive innovations, like longer broomhandles and bicycle-power pumps for their paddy fields. Even to these two writers, heartily in favor as they were of the Americans' being there, it was the relief of the ordinary people from poverty and drudgery and disease that seemed most important—their partial emancipation, at least, from *their* curse of alienation—their life-long denial of the self through the endless routine of working merely to keep alive.

The suggestions of Lederer and Burdick for relieving the people of South-East Asia from their burden of alienation, while doubtless well-intentioned, seem modest to the point of the ridiculous when compared with some of the points included in the program adopted by the First Congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, early in 1962, as reported by Wilfred G. Burchett, an Australian with twenty-five years of experience in war reporting, largely in the Far East, in his book, *The Furtive War,* an account of the United States' involvement in Vietnam and Laos.[18]

Burchett describes the National Liberation Front of South Viet-nam as comprising delegates from the Democratic Party, the Radical Socialist Party, the People's Revolutionary Party (of the worker-peasant movement and militant intellectuals), social and religious organizations, committees for peace and for Afro-Asian Solidarity, associations of writers and journalists, armed religious sects, and the ethnic minorities. The delegates, he says, "repre-sented every province and major town in South Vietnam, and a good cross-section of the population."

This is the national organization behind the people described in official news reports as the Viet Cong, a shortened name for the Vietnamese communists, with whom all active participants in the liberation movement are identified by government spokesmen.

The nearest approach in our American experience to this kind of identification would be the communist-labelling readily applied to all advocates of the civil rights movement by some of its opponents, except that the South Vietnam Liberation Front is far more representative of the general population than our civil rights movement, broad as it now is.

Among the aims stressed by Liberation Front participants—the image which the Front represents to them—were pensions for the aged, maternity benefits, and child welfare—aims familiar to us, especially in connection with the war on poverty—land reform, neutralization of South Vietnam and its neighbors on the basis of no military alliances, the right to accept economic aid from any country, with "no political conditions attached," the withdrawal of U.S. interventionist forces, and eventual—not immediate—reunion with North Vietnam.

Land reform is of special concern to the Liberation Front, membership of which is open to landlords who do not work as agents "of the imperialists." Their right to own land is to be recognized:

> But they must carry out the present agrarian policy of the Front, which is to reduce land rents and guarantee peasants' tenant rights. In the future, the national coalition administration, by negotiation and at fair prices will purchase part of the land from the landlords for distribution to the peasantry. Help will be extended to the landlords to enter trade and industry.

Such plans go far beyond the primitive and piecemeal proposals for aid to the people of Vietnam approved by Lederer and Burdick. They are closely in line—although at a more developed stage—with the aims of the Philippine peasants in *Fortress in the Rice*—aims which were defeated by the landlord-backed Philippine army with American assistance. Incidentally, the program in South Vietnam calls for much milder treatment of the dissident landlords than that imposed on the landed Tories in our own revolution. All in all, having once been made aware of the statesmanlike Liberation

Front program, what response could an intelligent and proud people be expected to give to the shreds and patches offered them through such American largess as Lederer and Burdick reported? Could such flattering unction as this restore the devastated fields and villages, the blasted forests, the dead children?

And yet the program described by Burchett is, in short, what the Western nations have been accepting, actually or by implication, in their release of one after the other of the new Asian and African states, and it is the program which they must soon be prepared to accept in dealing with the few remaining colonies or economic dependencies. As a goal for South Vietnam ascribed by Burchett to the Liberation Front there, it is simply a local manifestation, amid desperate harassment, of the pattern favored and followed by the chosen leaders of the new states in guiding their emergence onto the world stage, in aiding their people to put an end to their age-long alienation, their by-passing and neglect as part of the vague myriads of the *world's* "invisible poor," that are today so obviously always with us.

It is a pattern which, if applied in practice in South-East Asia, with full participation by the Americans—along with other friendly states, East and West—might well be expected to transform that region within a few years into an earthly paradise. What a contrast between this expectation and the reality of what we, the Americans, have brought so far, with our preferred image in mind, to the people of South Vietnam: the guillotinemobiles and concentration camps of Diem, and still, under his successors, however apologetically, the generous baptism of napalm, the crop-shrivelling "insecticides"!

How are we to explain the discrepancy between the American image, so familiar to us, of the program appropriate for Vietnam, and the sharply-variant goals-in-mind now so widely entertained in the newly-emergent nations?

III. SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE: THE AMERICAN IMAGE AND THE GLOBAL REALITIES

Is the gloomy view of our condition so prevalent in recent imaginative literature of the Western nations merely "submarine"—to use Eliot's image—directed hazily upward from the muddy bottom? Our prevalent view of foreign lands and peoples in comparison

with our own might, perhaps, be more accurately defined as narcissistic. Have we not, at times, seen mirrored in two oceans, indeed in two hemispheres, diminished, yet still flattering and delusive, images of ourselves?

Our prevalent image of the U.S.A. is too familiar to require much further elucidation here. It is an image of the United States as leader of the Free World, an image of the most advanced, and hence logically predominant, nation-state, competent and perpetually alert to lead new or doubtful states in the way they should go—the obviously superior American way.

What we need to remember is that this favorite view of the U.S.A. has its corollary in our image of the other side, the other team.

We picture ourselves not simply as the leading champion of the "Free World," but as the antithesis of a "slave world"—of the socialist bloc as enslaved under "communism," meaning Soviet socialism. And yet there are too many reports in our own press about notable gains under socialism, despite its lags and set-backs, to insure complete acceptance of this mainly American picture among impartial observers. There are too many fiercely uncommitted people saying they want socialism. There is too much embarrassment over "free world" countries like Spain and Portugal, too much American anxiety over the tendency of influential Latin American countries to move toward non-commitment or beyond.

We picture ourselves as foremost among the "advanced" nations, and the newly-emerged states and the communist "satellite" countries as "backward" by comparison. This is an especially confusing distinction, because despite our phenomenal advances in technology and trade we too have our poverty, our menaces of inflation and depression; and Latin America and India, along with these, have their appalling illiteracy, their abbreviated life-span. The distinction is confusing, also, in view of the impressive efforts of some so-called backward countries—Egypt and other African countries, for example—to improve their economies, to make them, if not as yet very forward-moving, at least forward-looking.

More confusing still is our image of the United States as the preeminent exemplar of one group of nations confronting another group, an image which connotes a corresponding image of the members of the socialist bloc as a cluster of competing nation-states after our own pattern, with "Russia"—as we still persist in calling

the Soviet Union—as our opposite number, as though it were still the nineteenth-century empire of the Czars. And yet the Soviet Union has been for many years a system of partner republics, each with impressive developments to show (as well as difficulties) in its own economic achievement, its own culture, and all member units benefitting, nevertheless, from the widely-inclusive, widely-varied partnership. We think of the socialist countries—particularly the U.S.S.R.—as if they were still imperialist powers on the 19th-century model, forever on the make for more territory, forever flourishing to some small degree—as the wicked are permitted to flourish, evilly, for a time—at the expense of resources drained from their colonies. Yet the question of nationalities oppressed under Czarism was pretty thoroughly solved in the Soviet Union. Substantial encouragement has been given from the first to each of the ethnic units in that many-nationed system to develop its own economy, language, art, and religion. The Socialist Republic of Armenia remains an outstanding example of this treatment, and of its success.

Most crucially confusing, perhaps, is our picturing of the socialist states as fatally *truncated* replicas of the Western democracies— a view based on the grounds that the socialist state has a dictator instead of a president, a "rubber-stamp" assembly instead of a congress, a single party instead of two or more competing parties. The typical socialist state—the U.S.S.R., for instance—is geared not to our own middle-class aims and programs (support of private enterprise, etc.) but to the needs and aims of the working people in city and country. It is geared primarily to popular needs and objectives—guaranteed employment, with full support of the incapacitated or retired, housing, education, health, and social welfare, and in consequence of these aims, to the continuing development of industry, agriculture, power, and transportation.

We have long stigmatized the socialist state as a police state because it is not based upon our middle-class model. And we have long supported, and are still actively supporting, any state with basically middle-class orientation, in which the government gives its predominant support to private industry, whether native or foreign, regardless of whether that government is a democracy of the preferred type, or a monarchy, a feudal oligarchy, or a fascist dictatorship.

Hence, in accordance with our corollary image, we maintain

(typically) a consistent hostility to socialist measures and to socialist or non-committed regimes, bolstering with our approval and support many such states which would otherwise have long since given way to change in these unapproved directions.

Our private investors, fearing nationalization in newly-independent, or as it seems to them, otherwise "unstable" states, withhold investments where capital backing is badly needed, and so they leave the way open for acceptance by these states of extensive aid, on easy terms, from the socialist countries. The latter are nearly always ready, on their part, to make large investments in capital and technical assistance in the expectation of building mutual-aid relations, and incidentally in extending and strengthening the system of socialist and non-committed partner states.

Then there is our general ignorance of the view of people on the "other side," and our tendency, moreover, to overlook, or minimize, the importance of such views, along with the people who hold them, like the writer in *Fortune,* who overlooked the mass of poverty disclosed by Harrington from the same data.

Some of our most outstanding political and diplomatic and industrial leaders are probably more or less aware of our misconceptions about the socialist system. But many of their followers are not, and tend to remain ignorant of them, partly because leaders and followers alike are subject to constant pressures based on the unclear or deliberately confused image of the "other side." In addition, there are those continually and aggressively committed to perpetuating the confusion in the service of vested political or economic interests.

Yet to make these observations about the confusion of images—intentional or otherwise—is not to say that this is confined to the U.S. or to "our side." Such confusion is the frequent effect of barriers to free communication, which make for the alienation of either side from the other, for their mutual alienation on an all-inclusive global scale.

The intention here is to underscore the need for clarifying the true image, the better to counteract the false and misleading one, which could be called (after Friedan) the American Mystique, since we act according to the image—true or false—that we have in mind of a situation to be faced.

The view we seek takes full account of the forces in our society, but focusses attention on the point at which these forces impinge

on us and we respond to them, whether confusedly (with a blurred and distorted or needlessly-discouraging image of the forces in mind) or intelligently and hopefully, on the strength of a clarifying and directing picture of the realities we face.

I propose now to examine the importance of A.I.M.S. in connection with this clarification of the realities of our time.

IV. ON WHAT THE IMAGE IS TO A.I.M.S., AND A.I.M.S. TO THE IMAGE

The difficulty, as we have said, of understanding the world is not confined to the U.S.A. Mphahlele, in *The African Image*,[19] recalls, with a touch of wry humor,

> "the damnable old *cliché* that we have come to associate with the colonial or the European who comes back to Africa with that back-to-the-womb expression on his face."

—which recalls the Freudian dictum, so effectively dealt with by J. Dover Wilson, that Hamlet's trouble could be summed up by pointing to his mother fixation.[20]

Mphahlele, in two of his chapters, entitled, respectively, "The White Man's Image of the Non-White in Fiction," and "The Black Man's Literary Image of Himself," traces the slow and torturous process by which the image of the African, and of Africa, has been emerging. Slogans, like the "African Personality" slogan, act on the artist like a heavy object thrown onto a balance. They make the dial quiver so much it doesn't register anything:

> . . . In the final analysis, the battle must be resolved inside himself as a result of his own effort. Every artist in the world, African or not, must go through the agony of purging his art of imitations and false notes before he strikes an individual medium. . . . He is . . . the sensitive point of his community and the cultural impacts about him must, if he has the make-up of an artist, teach him to express the longings, failings and successes of his people. . . .

More must be said later of this penetrating observation.

Mphahlele, in his discussion of the African image, shows limited enthusiasm for the romantically horrendous picture of African

tribal life presented by Sir Henry Rider Haggard in *King Solomon's Mines,* a yarn which made night hideous for some of us in youth, and may have left its all-but-ineradicable impression upon our later, if not fully mature years.

Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country,* as well-known among Americans, perhaps, as any imaginative work about recent Africa, reflects, in Mphahlele's judgment, too much patient suffering on the part of the Zulu minister, too little militant determination in facing the catastrophe which Paton, as a white liberal of British background, sees ahead.

It may not be amiss to remind ourselves, here, of Mphahlele's statement to the effect that Africans themselves, White and Black, are still struggling hard, and as yet not with complete success, to portray the emergent African and the new-old Africa.

Mphahlele finds, interestingly enough insofar as this writer is concerned, that the three white novelists who have been most successful so far in portraying characters of "cultural groups outside their own" are E. M. Forster (in *A Passage to India*), Josef Conrad (in *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*) and William Faulkner (in *Light in August*). All of these, Mphahlele feels, have been able to disregard or transcend the "racial" barrier and depict their characters as human beings.

Progress achieved by Africans and others in their efforts to establish the African identity and the lineaments of the emergent Africa are readily overlooked, however, in situations no matter how remote, where the interests of powerful nation-states are held to be involved. Here again we must recall that a good many states which can be so identified—including our own—are still deeply concerned about Africa and its future—and not always for the sake of the Africans. Nkrumah's plan for the modernization of Ghana, for example, is commented on in the *Reader's Digest* of June, 1964, in a sharply-drawn reminder of the American view of what Ghana needs, which it is feared Nkrumah may be by-passing.[21] The article is not, of course, addressed to Nkrumah. Yet the *Digest* continues to provide home and homeroom readings for millions of American youngsters—and their elders—across the nation, including, one may assume, not a few Negro intellectuals.

Such powerful press media are in a strategic position not only to create "pseudo-events"—the news stories and television reports larger and more exciting than life—but to interpret and continu-

ally reiterate them in terms of the prevailing American image which these media have themselves been largely instrumental in creating. The products of such media are obviously of immense value by reason of the vast store of information which they convey about the world; their menace—less obvious—lies in the often-hidden assumptions or uncritical biases sometimes reflected in editorial policies, whether influenced by the demands of readers or viewers, the expectations of advertisers, or the climate of state policy.

It is the unevenness of these products of the national periodical press and television channels in respect to their fundamental reliability or the lack of it that reveals their fatal flaw. This it is that gives today's Red Cross Knight, with his somewhat modernized martial equipment, the opportunity to close, with some hope of success, with these formidable, sophisticated paper dragons.

Indispensable hardware in that armament of the modern champion of righteousness are the lance of criticism and the shield of fact. But imaginative art may provide—in poetry, drama, fiction, and satire in all these forms, as well as in meaningful graphic art and music—weapons which, in the end, may spell the difference between triumph and defeat. Scholars and researchers can be creative artists, but their definitive task as scholars is to uncover or marshall the data. The part of the creative artist is, in the larger sense, to dramatize the data.

What we are dealing with here is the unfolding drama of social change—a drama which, if fully reflected in viable art forms, can have an appeal as great as *Hamlet* or *King Lear*. People are reading more than ever these days, and they still flock to good plays. And the plays need not dwell, with raven-like insistence, upon the so-familiar theme of individual alienation, a preoccupation which perhaps owes much to the personal frustrations of our time, and something, also, to our generation-long habit of assuming psychology to be synonymous and co-terminal with the psychology of the abnormal. What, after all, is the most normal human condition if not the facing of problems, and the effective, and if possible enjoyable, solving of them? And as we have seen, many of our alienation problems of today are problems of the group.

My intention here is to stress the importance of including a goodly contingent of creative artists among the participants in A.I.M.S. Prolonged association of artists and scholars could be of

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inestimable value in aiding the artists to achieve weight and direction and the scholars that imaginative grasp which can convert the threads into a splendor of damask and the beads into a circlet for kings—if there were kings—to conjure with.

To say this is not to ignore the point made by Mphahlele that the artist's battle to achieve his individual medium "must be resolved inside himself as a result of his own effort." It is to affirm, rather, that thought, as well as the raw data of purely affective experience, is probably an essential component in the making of an artist; otherwise he can himself become hopelessly alienated, like the young Negro musician in Baldwin's *Another Country;* or his expression may become, at best, a private language.

The program of A.I.M.S. as outlined in the announcement of the first Symposium (April 23, 1964) calls to mind, in this connection, a paperback called *This Little Band of Prophets,* written by an English writer about the work of the Fabian Socialists in Great Britain over a generation beginning about 1890, who had George Bernard Shaw as their leading spokesman. Within that period, and within their universe of discourse, they were apparently instrumental not only in producing most of the significant books—historical, sociological, fictional, and dramatic—which came off the British presses but in securing, also, the passage of nearly every progressive measure passed by the British Parliament. They didn't all think alike; they were, in fact, of all political parties or of no party at all. But they worked on problems of common interest and kept up a continuing discussion of their individual findings and opinions. What they accomplished was to create a composite general picture of the England of their day as they saw it as against the England which it could become—albeit not quite New Jerusalem pictured by Blake in his poem about Milton.

A like opportunity is open to A.I.M.S. today—with the new and emergent world realities in mind, to achieve a most desirable goal —as its prospectus stated—". . . by enlisting men and women of the widest and most divergent views in non-partisan studies of Marxist thought."

And to the "scholars" and other "public-spirited citizens" whose support and active participation are to be engaged in this enterprise must be added, or must include from the first, a leaven of our

ablest practitioners in all the areas of imaginative art.

The argument of this paper resolves itself, at this point, into the scrutiny of two ways of looking at man and his place in the world. Their divergence was dramatized for me in the titles and contents of two books which I found displayed, (in 1963), in bookstalls along the Seine. In one of these books, a paperback collection of essays by Albert Camus, I read "The Myth of Sisyphus," which gave the book its title.[23] This essay left me with the impression of a man forever frustrated, forever alien to his world, finding his meager satisfaction in pushing a heavy rock from the bottom to the top of a mountain, from which he knew it must surely fall. Camus' modern Sisyphus finds satisfaction only in his persistence in this completely frustrating task and in his scorn of the frustration.

The other volume, authored by Louis Séchan, was entitled *The Myth of Prometheus*.[24] It shows that insurgent Titan, following the interpretation of Aeschylus, as the true benefactor of mankind in bringing to man—along with his material gifts—the consciousness that justice is not a gift from heaven, but must depend for its nurture on man himself. The Prometheus of Aeschylus—and Séchan—symbolizes man's realistic hope of making man, rather than a blindly-vindictive heaven, the arbiter of human destiny.

Now quite apart from any attempt to evaluate either of these books as literature, or to trace to their sources the contrasting images which they present, it seems to me that the respective *effects* of these two images upon the unsuspecting reader are likely to be markedly different. The first is likely to leave him with a sense of the basic hopelessness of human effort, the second with a sense of its basic hopefulness.

If, in the interest of clarifying this point in its bearing on Mphahlele's prescription for the emergence of the true artist, I may be permitted some latitude in the use of allusion and metaphor, I will say that these two images, respectively, leave me with somewhat the following impressions of the artist's possible outlook and influence as a sensitive, representative man: in the one, the artist, caught between the lines of insensate forces clashing in his soul, sprung from the dragons' teeth of brute experience, falls and bleeds upon the thorns of life; in the other, borne upon the shoulders of the rejected and proscribed, now irresistibly on the march

to assured goals, he becomes indeed the trumpet of a prophecy.*

I would like to cite, in closing, a fable (in somewhat free translation) by Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian,[25] a lesser French La Fontaine, in which he pictures Truth as wandering threadbare and neglected on the streets, until Fable, richly dressed, and adorned with plumes and gems—although some of these are false—takes pity on her plight.

"What are you doing here, all by yourself?" Fable asks Truth. And Truth replies:

"As you see, here I am, freezing to death, and nobody will take me in. They're all afraid of me. I can see this well enough, but what can an old woman hope for?"

"Yet after all," says Fable, "you're my younger sister. Now, bragging aside, I'm very well received everywhere. But Truth, why do you go around naked? That's not very bright. Come on now, and let us get organized, and pool our resources. Come under my cloak, and we'll go along together. When we come to a wise man's house, because of you I won't be turned away; and because of me, when we're among fools you won't be badly treated. In this way, each of us, in her own fashion, will be good for the other. Thanks to your good sense, and to my foolish charm, you'll see, sister, that we'll get along fine together, wherever we go."

* The allusions here are, of course, mainly to Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," with a touch also of Shelley's "Masque of Anarchy," an undertone from Bulfinch's *Mythology*, and a hint of Freud.

These and the frequent phrasing from Shakespeare—himself a perennial and shameless borrower—all of which I proudly acknowledge—illustrate the thought which I am most anxious to have my readers remember: that such images, once encountered, have a way of sticking in one's mind, and showing themselves, combined in diverse ways in unexpected places.

If some of these images are remembered by my readers after my labored precepts are forgotten, I will still have made my point, that, as Spenser says: "So much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, than by rule."

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V.

EXISTENTIALISM AND MARXISM IN DIALOGUE

(A Review of Sartre's *The Problem of Method*)

Howard L. Parsons

The existential Sartre (not "an existentialist") is here in search of a method—a method for knowing man. Since "knowing" turns out to be, in its fullest sense, "realizing"—becoming, totalizing—Sartre is in search of a method of human living. He asks, "Do we have today the means to constitute a structural, historical anthropology?"[1]

This search originates in the contradiction between existence and knowledge. Sartre discovers this contradiction not in existentialism or phenomenology or science but in Marxism. This discovery is made by one who, with an existentialist history and orientation, takes his stand within Marxism. Why does not Sartre speak from outside Marxism, as an existentialist? He believes that a living philosophy always expresses the self-consciousness of the rising class and is the effort to integrate totally ("totalize") all contemporary knowledge. Descartes and Locke created a philosophy, Kant and Hegel did—and now society lives under the spell of the philosophy created by Marx. Therefore any answer to Marxism is only a preMarxian argument, or an ideological derivative. An example of the latter is existentialism.[2] It is an "enclave"[3] inside Marxism, "parasitical,"[4] generated by it and in turn generating the contradiction which is here under consideration, namely, that between existence and knowledge, between the individual and culture, between freedom and determination, and the like.

Thus Sartre's work is simultaneously a personal, existential effort to resolve a contradiction between his own existential method and

his Marxist method, and an effort to meet Marxists, to communicate with them, and to invite them by his own example to enter into the dialogue with the existential antagonist who (he believes) springs up in their midst when they confront themselves honestly. It should be noted that in defining philosophy Sartre accepts the importance of the categories of society, history, and class. Further, his dialogue with himself and with Marxists is significant as a sign of the new turn that philosophy is taking in Europe generally, a turn toward openness, inquiry, fresh analysis of assumptions, discussion, and new integrations.

Sartre very nicely lays before us the history of this problem. Hegel created a grand philosophical totalization: man, through the supreme inclusive power of Mind, loses himself in knowledge, and is lifted up into the concrete unity of the Absolute. But Kierkegaard would not have it so, stubbornly insisting on the specific, subjective, inward, subrational, individual life of faith. Here is an *existence* that resists reduction to the formula, "The Real is the Rational"—a free, passionate subject, defiantly shaking his fist at the onrolling System. But, we may add, though Kierkegaard was, *vis a vis* Hegel, a kind of realist, he perpetuated, with his subjectivism, idealism. In fighting the battle against Hegelianism, Kierkegaard beat back the threat of almighty monism and saved the land for the Religious Individual. But that same land was seized by the Bourgeois Individual, who, though wearing religious clothes, yet claimed his absolute sovereignty—against church (Protestant), against state (entrepreneur), and against God (atheist).

Marx, on the other hand, absorbed and transformed Hegel. For while Kierkegaard remained bound to the limits of Hegel's thought while repudiating its rationalism, Marx conquered it and surpassed it by locating the dialectic in history *as made by specific human beings.* "Thus Marx, rather than Kierkegaard or Hegel, is right, since he asserts with Kierkegaard the specificity of human *existence* and, along with Hegel, takes the concrete man in his objective reality." [5]

But, as we know, existentialism never took hold; Hegelianism (and later positivism) was sufficient unto the bourgeois day in Europe—in opposition to a proletariat armed with Marxism. And pragmatism in the U. S. became the voice of an experimental and improvising people whose class lines were obscured by relative social mobility and individual hope of competitive success. Between

the wars, Jaspers in Germany revived Kierkegaard, expressing and justifying bourgeois alienation and "an aristocracy of the soul."[6] At this point the young Sartre, born in 1905, comes on the scene. He does not speak specifically about the influence of the Brentano-Husserl-Heidegger heritage on him. But he does tell dramatically of how the students of his generation, forbidden to study Hegel or Marx, were attracted to "the Proletariat as the incarnation and vehicle of an idea"—"the heavy presence on my horizon of an enormous somber body";[7] how the students longed for "the absolute concrete"; how they went whoring after the gods of pluralism and ended up victimized by confusing totalization with individuality; and how "it took the whole bloody history of this half century to make us grasp the reality of the class struggle and to situate us in a split society."[8]

But something happened. Marxism left its followers stranded because, in the U.S.S.R., under the impact of encirclement, the demand for industrialization, the need for security and the building of socialism, the fear that free inquiry would shatter the solidarity of struggle—Marxism stopped. Thus theory and *praxis* were separated: theory became pure and fixed, *praxis* and fact became the putty to be shaped by a predestined mold, distorted by both idealism and violence. Marxism became transmogrified into a sclerotic, abstract, scholastic scheme of concepts, in which particulars were liquidated and "dissolved in universals," open concepts were closed, particularized ideas were fetishized and absolutized, regulative ideas were made constitutive, change was reduced to identity, and history was seen as the shadowy reflection of an *a priori*, perfect, sun-like dialectic. As examples, Sartre cites the two opposite, dogmatic interpretations of the events in Hungary in November, 1956, Guerin's *La Lutte des classes sous la première République,* Lukacs, and others.

In consequence of this stultification of Marxism we can see that Sartre and his existentialist friends, themselves Marxists, exemplified (now openly and consciously) the contradiction which many Marxists heretofore suppressed, in themselves and others. They believed, as Sartre says, that historical materialism was valid for history, and that existentialism was the only concrete method for dealing with reality. But it is plain, I believe, that in preserving one-sidedly the existential approach many existentialists have suffered the partial loss of society and history, while in preserving

the orientation of historical materialism (one-sidedly) many Marxists have suffered the partial loss of the individual. This wound in the progressive movement of mankind manifests itself in individuals, in parties and coalitions, in the relations between the Soviet Union and her European allies. And it reveals itself in the U.S.-Soviet relations, and now, curiously, in the relations between the Soviet Union and China (wherein the Soviet Union takes a more existentialist or concrete approach against a more doctrinaire view in its dealings with capitalism). As Sartre does not point out here (but perhaps does in the longer work, *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, of which this is the preface), this wound and contradiction is in turn the consequence of the historical contradiction between the individual in his forlorn bourgeois solitude and his society, both the old exploitive one and the new cooperative one. That fact does not put the blame on history, but it puts the problem in perspective. It also explains the persistent ambivalence of Sartre toward both existentialism and Marxism. Both must be maintained, both negated, and both transcended. Marxism is "almost in its infancy" and is "the philosophy of our time. We cannot go beyond it because we have not gone beyond the circumstances which engendered it."[9]

Sartre does not consider himself a Marxist because, as he puts it, he cannot take the statements of Engels and Garaudy as constitutive, final, concrete truths; they are instead, he says, hypotheses to be worked out.[10] Still, "Marx's own Marxism"[11] contains the seeds of an existential account of man, and because the broader seedbed—Marx's dialectical theory of history—is already there, these seeds must be cultivated right where they are. At the same time existentialism, using the method of existential psychoanalysis, remains a concrete approach to the ways in which man lives and realizes himself, particularly in his family relations. But Marxism has "wanted to integrate psychoanalysis into itself by first twisting its neck"[12]—whereas, we ought to add, existentialism has wanted to kill Marxism by an embargo of inattention. Of course these are twin evils: the violent person is always cold to what he wishes to destroy, while non-recognition thinly masks violence. Sartre remarks that no Marxist is capable of reading Heidegger.[13] Are there existentialists capable of reading Marx? This is a problem that cuts both ways, because it grows out of a contradiction, and it takes two parties to amplify a contradiction into an antagonism. In any case,

Sartre himself cannot be held responsible for the antagonism, for here he has honestly sought to heal the wound within his own thought. Sartre further acknowledges that this "anemia in the Marxist man" [14] is an anemia in all of us—that is, in modern man. Hence Sartre is worth listening to because in thus coming clean with himself and clarifying his own conflict he reveals to us ourselves, makes us aware of our participation in the human disease, and indicates what must be done for it to be healed.

Here neither we nor Sartre speak of *all* Marxists or *all* existentialists. Moreover, we are speaking of *emphases,* and of a contradiction whose content and form changes with changing circumstances. Sartre in this work (first written in 1957) declares that "our historical task, at the heart of this polyvalent world, iş to bring closer the moment when History will have *only one meaning,* when it will tend to be dissolved in the concrete men who will make it in common." [15] It was a different and less developed Sartre who said in *Being and Nothingness* (which first appeared in 1943) that "the Other is on principle inapprehensible; he flees me when I seek him and possesses me when I flee him," and that "man is a useless passion." [16] But not an altogether different Sartre. The early work may be taken as a criticism of the disease and anguish of bourgeois society, a negation of a world in which solitude is endemic and man is doomed to failure and despair. For, as Sartre confesses in the present work, "Existentialism, aided by psychoanalysis, can study today only situations in which man has been lost since childhood, for there are no others in a society founded in exploitation." [17] Because existentialism with its psychoanalytic method has as such "no theoretical foundations" [18] and seeks man "everywhere where he is" [19]—it cannot find this lost man because it itself is a creature of an alienated world. Existential studies remain autonomous so long as Marxists build their knowledge on an absolute idealism masquerading as materialism and an "objectivism" that turns man into a questioned being solely and blots out the questioner—so long as Marxists substitute "a dogmatic metaphysics" for "the comprehension of the living man." [20] Sartre does not aim to add the non-rational to Marxism but rather tries to rediscover the existential base in Marxism itself, "to reconquer man within Marxism." Since to know man is an effort of the understanding, and since Marxists have suppressed awareness of man, Sartre aims "to reduce the part of indetermination and non-knowl-

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edge."[21] In short, he wrestles with the problem of man in history. And whether we concur with him or not, we all ought to join him in that struggle; for that is our common burden and opportunity.

Thus Sartre sets out to correct a flaw in Marxism, namely, the loss of man's existential being in knowledge. He then proceeds to a specific criticism of the *a priori*, "pre-fabricated molds"[22] by which Marxists force individuals and history into the Procrustean bed of omnipotent categories and oppressive powers. Naturally, all writing of history simplifies events; but Sartre asks that the writing of history include at least *man*, i.e., "study real men in depth, not dissolve them in a bath of sulphuric acid."[23] He then offers a detailed critique of Guerin's account of the French Revolution and of a Marxist account of Flaubert. The critical flaw in these accounts is that free men are transformed into blind physical forces ("It is men who do, not avalanches"[24]) and teleology is denied to men but simultaneously smuggled into history and concealed there. This is not a contradiction, says Sartre; it is "bad faith."[25] Bad faith, as he said in *Being and Nothingness*, is dishonesty with oneself—denying what one is and pretending to be what one is not.

The solution is for the questioner (man) to acknowledge himself—i.e., his individuality, his project—as presupposed in the questioned—always absorbed in it but always breaking out of it and transcending it. This requires honesty toward oneself and others. ("The majority of socialist countries *do not know themselves*"[26]— and, we may add, do not know their opponents; but this double ignorance is accompanied by a deeper double ignorance in the capitalist countries, whose Cold War is in large part responsible for the ignorance of each toward the other.) This also requires an existential acknowledgement of uncertainties, ambiguities, oppositions, and contradictions at the heart of the human condition. It means, indeed, acknowledgement of the full meaning of the fundamental Marxist categories—exploitation, alienation, fetishizing, reification, *praxis*, labor—for these "must immediately refer to existential structures."[27] But for the Marxist, bad faith wants to leave man absorbed in his objectivity, to reduce individuals to notes in the grand symphony of history, to turn them into molecules whose chance agitations are magically harmonized by the laws of the dialectic.

How shall we deal with the fact of individuality? Anarchism dei-

fies it by absolutizing it, totalitarianism damns it by destroying it. Both views suffer from self-ignorance, self-deceit, and self-aliena-tion; both are reflections and perpetuations of a world estranged and divided by classes. Sartre argues that only as one understands individuals freely creating history in common and in a material, historical context—totalizing, becoming—can we truly understand men, i.e., *be* men. Who am I? Who is the other? The true, Sartre thinks, is both existential *and* social: I am integrated with but also separated from others—united and alienated, cooperative and exploitive, subjective and objective, but always creating with others and making my own world with others for good or bad. Hence the ambivalence that Sartre expresses in his early work comes out with a new force now, for he now reveals emphatically the creative and social side of man's struggle. Man struggles in a pre-dawn era, and the darkness of his condition is relieved by the first faint glimmer-ings of hope.

Accordingly Sartre repeatedly refers to the statements of Marx and Engels like this: "it is men themselves who make their history but within a given environment . . . among which economic condi-tions—no matter how much influenced they may be by other political and ideological conditions—are nevertheless, in the final analysis, the determining conditions. . . ."[28] Of course such a state-ment contains the seeds of the antagonism that Sartre is trying to overcome, as the one side emphasizes men making history and the other, "economic conditions." *Both* are correct; but historically, says Sartre, Marxists have seized on the latter, assimilated the autonomous individual, and suppressed man and his relations in his groups in favor of a mechanical Dialectic delineated by dog-matists and demanded by bureaucrats. Marxists need to recover the dialectic via a concrete anthropology; existentially, this means that they need to recover themselves *as men who do in fact, with other men, make history.* Their theorizing and their practice must meet, reinforcing and creating one other. Sartre scorns the "lazy Marxism" which "makes real men into the symbols of its myths."[29]

Sartre's criticism of Marxism is discussed in detail under "the problem of mediations." Marxists, he says, can "situate" a person or event by establishing its material conditions, relevant produc-tive forces, class relations, etc. But they never fully explain how they are mediated by the concrete relations of persons in "collec-tives" or immediate particular groups—and so create the concrete

individual; nor how the individual in turn creates his group which in turn affects the social environment and history. Following the tradition of Husserl, Sartre cries, "To the men themselves!" Following a tradition in French social psychology (and especially a French Marxist sociologist, Henri Lefebvre), Sartre holds that we should analyze concretely how men are made in their primary interactions one with another. (He leaves out almost entirely men's relations to their industrial world and the world of nature generally.)

This analysis requires a psycho-genetic approach and, in particular, concentration on the family as a mode of mediation between (1) general determinations like class and (2) the individual. "Today's Marxists are concerned only with adults; reading them, one would believe that we are born at the age when we earn our first wages. They have forgotten their own childhoods."[30] Sartre then proceeds with his usual perceptiveness to show how the "mediation" of the family profoundly shaped the development of Flaubert. Here, then, we come upon a synthesis between existential psychoanalysis and Marxism. For the child—"in the depth and opaqueness of childhood"[31]—experiences the antagonisms and traumas of a class society. All the contradictory roles which we unconsciously adopt then "tear us apart."[32] But if the adult is to deal with these and transcend them, he must lay them bare in his own self-consciousness and, through that revelation, lay bare the antagonisms of his society. By the same token, we may add, self-conquest is inseparable from the collective conquest of the antagonisms of one's society. This is why the Proletariat can become subject and controller of History only as it recognizes itself in history and takes account of those *others,* opposite them, who strive to make history in *their* own way.

Sartre then turns to a sketch of his own existential method in order to supply a concrete anthropology whose lineaments, he believes, already lie in Marx. This is "the progressive-regressive method." To understand a human event (Sartre's favorite example is Flaubert) we must enter back into it and discover analytically that vast complexity of "heterogeneous significations"[33] which comprise it in its horizontal, temporal, personal, inter-personal, and social meanings. We must also recover, by our own creative power, the synthetic "totalizing movement of enrichment"[34] by which the existent person transforms all these objective givens into his own

project and returns to the world a newly given objectivity, namely, his product. The solution to "the problem of method," in brief, is—man. And so Sartre sets forth for us his view of man—it is an existentialist view, repeating the view of his earlier works but also transforming and surpassing that view in a conversation with Marxists inside Marxism. (Those who fail to see the existential element in Marx—i.e., his emphasis on man as creator—would not agree that the conversation takes place inside Marxism. No matter: Sartre has something to say, he does accept Marx's basic premises, and he does undertake to do his part in dialogue.)

We must begin, says Sartre, as Marx began, with "the irreducibility of human *praxis*."[35] To be sure, such purposeful activity is set in the context of products determining man and, in every society, alienating him. And this poses immediately man's problem; to become conscious of himself and his history, and, as 19th century Marxism affirmed, to act collectively in such a way as to *create* a truly human history, freed of contradictions and blind, alien determinations. Unlike the earlier Sartre, who asserted that of the project "no interpretation . . . can be attempted,"[36] Sartre here says that *praxis* is "our peculiar structure":[37] man projects himself toward ends and this projection is "a permanent structure of human enterprises."[38] *Praxis* originates in need—a negation which is defined by the *scarcity* of society, which is caught in an existential complex of conditions, and which negates and goes beyond its present and given world by choosing and aiming at a possible and creating a new being. Becoming, creating, surpassing, past-being-transformed-into-future—a being which "chooses as the ideal of being, being-what-it-is-not and not-being-what-it-is"[39]—occurs only as a dialectical relation between man-as-existent and man-as-possible. These are dialectically related and hence mutually determining. For, as Sartre brought out in *Being and Nothingness,* "human reality, in its most immediate being . . . must be what it is not and not be what it is."[40]

Sartre denies that he introduces an irrational into his account.[41] On the contrary, mechanical materialism and absolute idealism, both infecting Marxism and producing its "anemia," irrationally substitute Being for becoming, Identity for change, and History for man. "The field of possibles," Sartre declares, "always exists, and we must not think of it as a zone of indetermination, but rather as a strongly structured region which depends upon all of

History and which includes its own contradictions."[42] The future, which "penetrates to the heart of each one as a real motivation,"[43] carries into the individual the contradictions of society. For example, a colored member of a ground crew at an air force base in England, forbidden to fly, rebels and pilots a plane into the air. His individual rebellion acts out his race's rebellion, society's class war, and his own real potential for freedom.

"It is necessary to choose,"[44] says Sartre, echoing an earlier theme. But this is no cavalier task. In all the innocence of his exposed condition, the child suffers the impact of his material world (scarcity, tools, modes of work, etc.). He internalizes the conflicts generated in that world (class struggle, opposed meanings, divergent roles, etc.) as mediated to him through his parents. He struggles with these forces darkly, defining his immediate and long-range future by simultaneous acceptance and revolt, obedience and "deviation," conformity and distortion. He wrestles with the contradictory realities and antagonistic values that threaten to wreck him. His is a lifelong effort: he "wrenches [himself] from despair by means of *objectification*."[45] He resists the dehumanization of physical deprivation or that solitude which defines "bourgeois death."[46] Is such struggle meaningful?

According to Sartre, the Marxists wish to say no. They therefore rob history of all ambiguity, decision, depth, and development, both in the individual and society. In the name of history, they empty history. In contrast, Sartre, the radical existentialist, intends to give history its due. We are confronted with history, unconsciously and multitudinously determined by it, and thrown forward by it. But even as we preserve its conflicts and alienations, we unveil them and surpass them. And our acts of surpassing enter back into history, as *objectifications*, and have their effects.[47] Marxists have achieved their result by reducing everything to economics, by neglecting the multiplicity of meanings that acts have (e.g., "avarice"), by forgetting that children and persons and groups are situated differently and project and synthesize differently. Marxists miss the dialectical interpenetration of each signification with the other and with all. The totalized understanding of man must discover "the multidimensional *unity* of the act."[48] But, claims Sartre, such an understanding has not yet been achieved.

Secondly, says Sartre, the Marxists blind themselves to the dialectical relation between the individual and the instruments of

his society. Cultural instruments cut across the path of the individual's project. He is forced to use them (words, ideas, systems of ideas) but is confined and eventually deviated by them. Still, he partially surpasses and changes the culture. Hence it is important not to pulverize a group or an individual (an example is Marquis de Sade in the hands of Marxists) with the millstones of "class ideology."[49] At this point Stalin and Plekhanov are scored. ("In the Stalinist world the event is an edifying myth. Here we find . . . the theoretical foundation for those fake confessions."[50]) Existentialism, however, affirms the *specificity* of historical events. The "contradictions" or, more accurately, conflicts of men explain nothing; they simply set the stage and provide the framework for events. Events are *ambiguous;* they are chosen, created, resolved; they unify and surpass oppositions. Existentialism thus seeks a "supple, patient dialectic" which does not assume that all conflicts are contradictions or contraries.[51] The methods of cross-reference (showing the mutual influence of a biography and the period), regression, and progression, says Sartre, can begin to accomplish this end.

Thirdly, Marxists wish to reduce *praxis* itself to simple reproduction of the given, to *explain* it by its *conditions.* For Sartre, this is again the error of dissolving the complex in the simple, change in identity, specificity in generality, and the future in the past. The error reverses the true relation: details of past conditions can be understood only as the decisive, synthesizing project is grasped. For "explanation" in human terms is always a matter of finding the *signification* of an act, and signification is personal, forward-looking, creative, and transcendent. Sartre's whole thesis may be summarized thus:

> Man constructs signs because in his very reality he is signifying; and he is signifying because he is a dialectical surpassing of all that is simply given. What we call freedom is the irreducibility of the cultural order to the natural order.[52]

I "comprehend" another's action when I myself rehearse his signifying intention and get the unity of his action into my own, i.e., when I comprehend myself. Comprehension "is the totalizing movement which gathers together my neighbor, myself, and the environment in the synthetic unity of an objectification in

process."[53] Thus we comprehend ourselves, others, and objects (whether made by others or not) only in *praxis*, i.e., purposive activity. Sartre rejects Marxist positivism: "A positivist who held on to his teleological color blindness in practical life would not live very long."[54] In purpose, Sartre believes, we can find the Archimedean point by which the whole world is moved. The "original dialectical movement" lies "in the individual."[55] This is the foundation of all anthropology.[56] To find what is truly human in the other, we cannot "objectify" him, as Sartre's earlier work shows. Such "objectivity" really makes the other over in a subjective image. We must know *ourselves* as human, and in interaction discover our counterpart there—"in struggle or in complicity."[57] The grave error of Marxists, according to Sartre, is that they do not found their knowledge of man "on rational and comprehensive *non-knowledge*,"[58] i.e., on man directly known in his project. Marxists eliminate the questioner and absolutize the questioned; they forget concrete *praxis* and exalt the abstract knowledge that grows out of it. Yet the very notions of exploitation, alienation, fetishizing, reification, etc., all "refer to existential structures"[59] and imply an end.[60]

Marxists may object that Sartre unwarrantedly throws an ahistorical freedom into the historical process. But, in contrast with his previous philosophy, Sartre at least tries to place the future as close to the present as possible without dissolving it in the present. He speaks of "the presence of the future at the heart of the present."[61] Ends are "not mysterious entities added on to the act itself; they represent simply the surpassing and the maintaining of the given in an act which goes from the present toward the future."[62] The end functions, as Dewey would put it, as an end-in-view that guides present action. It gradually becomes concrete, passing "from the abstract to the concrete, from the global to the detailed."[63] It is "enriched" as the action is enriched. "Always *on the other side of the present*, it is fundamentally only the present itself seen from its other side."[64]

Sartre's account then leads him to reject Engels' dialectic of bumping molecules and mathematical means, the Stalinist statistical fetishism, and the tendency to describe man in collectives. He also shows how under capital ends are incorporated into systems and then alienate people; these are appropriately called "impersonal finalities" or "counter-finalities."[65] How many of these over-

powering "collectives" and processes can we think of—"meaningless" activities, yet determinative of our destinies!

And what is to be done? An ideological project (and Sartre's book fits this description) aims "to change the basic situation by becoming aware of its contradictions."[66] It springs from a particular conflict expressing a universal condition. It aims to surpass that conflict, to reveal it, to make it manifest to all, to resolve it.[67] As a "practical organism"[68] man fights against his division and submersion in the conflicts of history, i.e., against his own self-defeat. *Praxis* begins in the negation that is need and aims at the negation of this negation by the negation of scarcity in society. It is defined as one man meets and comprehends the signifying *praxis* of another man, and as in labor they move to transform themselves and nature toward the end of fulfilling and recreating their needs. "The dialectic develops indefinitely and wholly in each dialectic process, whether it be individual or collective."[69]

Thus the problem of method is the problem of the opposition between knowing and being. According to Sartre, Marx's own Marxism required an existential answer and synthesis.[70] This answer begins with *praxis* and ends in *project*. But as Sartre says that is only the beginning of a task which must be taken up on Marxists themselves—to restore the "human dimension" to Marxism, and to solve the problem of man building on the foundation of man. Sartre praises Marxism for its "wish to transcend the oppositions of externality and internality, of multiplicity and unity, of analysis and synthesis, of nature and anti-nature."[71] He himself takes up this task; but he would be the last to say he had completed it. Nor is his attempt devoid of errors and oversights. But it does at least outline some of the issues and get them clearly before us.

*   *   *

What then can we say in criticism of this work?

(1) *Freedom and determinism.* In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre said "either man is wholly determined . . . or else man is wholly free."[72] Sartre's repeated arguments for this position set him over against those who believed that social action is possible and necessary precisely *because* man is determined by natural and social conditions and forces. But, though extreme, Sartre's arguments

were not without point and effect: as Kierkegaard revolted against Hegel, so Sartre revolted against all incarceration of man in materialistic determinism and bourgeois fatalism. But his revolt, while apropos, was overdrawn, polemical, dramatic, and literary. It was subjective, individual, and negative, and it ended in nausea —no fit mood for a revolutionary. It did not complete itself dialectically in the counter-movement of activity toward and against society. Thus it was common in those days to forgive Sartre by saying that his existential activity preceded, and was more than, his literary work. Many progressives and anti-fascists were willing to settle for Sartre's courageous political activities, even if these could not easily be derived from his philosophical writings, which seemed to defend solitude and futility in such affairs. Of course Sartre *had* a theory of responsibility: in creating ourselves we "create an image of man as we think he ought to be," and "in choosing myself, I choose man."[73] But this was a symbolic intersubjectivity, a social action that reduced itself to isolated monads coordinated, as it were, by some ideal universal form and not by direct communication, feeling, and action. To get from separated individuals to social action that was mutually meaningful, i.e., common, Sartre was forced to assume this common form— the project—but he never articulated this assumption because it would have destroyed his assertion that man has no nature.

But in practice man is plainly determined. The early Sartre was not blind to determination; but as a polemicist for freedom and responsibility, he simply refused to *include* such determination in a definition of man. Now he is ready to say that man is *both* free and determined in the dialectic that men together express in interaction with one another and the world. "The truth of a man is the nature of his work and it is his wages"[74] means now that man is in the world and the world is in man—dialectically, in creative synthesis. "The dialectical totalization must include acts, passions, work, and need as well as economic categories; it must at once place the agent or the event back into the historical setting, define him in relation to the orientation of becoming, and determine exactly the meaning of the present as such."[75] Here, far from criticizing existentialism as such, Sartre thinks that its object, "due to the default of the Marxists," is the particular man in the context of other men, his class, his collectives, his social field, and his total operative environment. Moreover, this is not a "freedom-fetish,"

says Sartre,[76] for the end of an act appears in and through the act as it progressively becomes concrete.[77]

Nevertheless, Sartre's sharpest thrusts are directed against those who would lose man by stressing the objective determinations of man's "nature." With as much fervor as ever, Sartre proclaims and defends the freedom of the individual. Sartre now admits, as he did not earlier, that man has a structure of work and *praxis*,[78] hedged about by a structure of possibility; and that, as he did say earlier, it is necessary for man to choose.[79] The domain of indetermination has been seriously reduced but not destroyed. An undetermined creativity at the heart of man, and hence at the heart of History, is preserved. "Freedom is the irreducibility of the cultural order to the natural order."[80]

Is it necessary for Sartre to retreat into this attic of *soi-disant* freedom and hold out to the last against the occupation of the troops of liberating determinism? I think not. Indeed, he has already made the decision to join the occupying troops—at least part way—although he wishes to hang on to this prior loyalty to indetermination. His "supple, patient dialectic"[81] is enough, he thinks, to deal with the dualism that still remains as residue in his philosophy. He says that Marxists write as if we were born when we begin to earn wages.[82] But Sartre writes as if we were hatched out on the beach like sea turtles, ready and equipped to take off for our natural element. He writes as if the individual body, though influencing the projective, free life, does not entirely touch that life; as if the "mind" or "spirit" (old words that he avoids) popped into being out of nowhere; as if the body itself did not have an evolutionary history of millions of years in the slime and verdure of nature. Does an understanding of the body mean a strict determinism, pushing man like a pinball through the routes and slopes of the world? Not necessarily. Biologists like C. S. Pittendrigh talk about a "teleonomic nature" which is orderly and self-directing. C. Judson Herrick, Lancelot Law Whyte, J. Bronowski, and Anatol Rapaport have said similar things about the directive "mechanisms" of natural processes and the necessity for process knowledge. If we cringe from the notion of "mechanism," it is only because we have in mind a 16th century, Cartesian notion of mechanism, one that does not do justice to the elaborately subtle behavior of a man (or a dolphin).

The solution here is to have a look at the body in the activity

of a man—a look Sartre rules out from the start because he is operating with a Kantian and even a Cartesian dualism, modified in a sophisticated way. What is the role of my body in my life and my freedom? My body is conceived in the body of my mother, through the union of her body with my father's body. My body feeds on her body, as a parasite on a host. After birth, she gives me suck at her breast; as a young mammal my body is gentled and cared for by other bodies. In response to the gestures and signs of others, my body learns to speak, to assume the roles of others, to write, to think, to choose. Where is the hiatus here between the body and the spirit, between nature and culture?

To be sure, qualitative leaps occur repeatedly in learning and in the emergence and development of personality. Consider a Negro child denied adequate schooling in the South. All that happens to him happens in and to his body. He suffers *with* his body, he resents *with* his body, he reacts and *revolts with* his body, he thinks and plans and acts out his plans *with* his body. He is nowhere where his body is not also, and when he acts in any way he "embodies" a project and his body projects itself toward a goal. When he "throws himself into his work," he throws his whole body. But both segregationists and half-hearted integrationists find it convenient to separate body and soul: the segregationist believes that at best the Negro deserves the necessity for physical existence (since the soul as independent can take care of itself, or will be taken care of by God) ; while the half-hearted integrationist thinks that physical integration (in voting, jobs, schools, etc.) is enough —he has a horror of mixing what is by nature unmixable, namely, separate black souls and white souls.

The practical weakness of Sartre's position is this: when we come to solving a human problem such as segregation, Sartre's approach is to appeal to the effort, will-power, and freedom of all persons affected. Presumably he would be concerned about altering the environmental conditions (the scarcity of food, clothes, houses, tools and facilities for living and working, jobs, schools, etc.) . But such alteration would be secondary, following from a conversion, or internal upsurge, of individual persons. But how free is a Negro child or an adult Negro who has been crippled in body and mind by the conditions of segregation? The point is that man's freedom is a function of physical conditions (including the condition of his body) just as the conditions are a function of

his freedom. An effective revolutionary, in dialectical fashion, works both sides of this street.

Because of the palpable and pivotal role of the body in human activity, Sartre, when he subordinates the body, provides for himself a loophole for a quasi-idealistic conception of freedom. Sign-processes are in fact bodily processes—what else?—but in his opposition to determinism Sartre wants to make them "transcendent." In *Being and Nothingness* the body is called a necessary contingency; yet it is something to be surpassed and fled as the self becomes what it is not. The body just *is*, a lump of flesh that is finished. The body is identified with the past, the inert, and facticity.[83] Like a kind of ectoplasmic pseudopod my project then takes off from my body; it must live without the body, yet it cannot live without it. Hence apprehension of the body produces that revolting estrangement which Sartre calls "nausea."[84] In his present work Sartre has not entirely abandoned this dualism. Yet he does not dwell on the dualism but instead takes pains to show the operations of freedom. But the problem of freedom and of man will not be solved until the body is taken seriously and understood in its ecological relations to nature and to culture (which is nature symbolized). Sartre asks for a comprehension of the whole complex of elements that go into the making of a life. But this means a grasp of a particular genotype and somatotype, of constitutional and temperamental dispositions, of a bodily style (standing, walking, talking, looking, listening, taking ill, projecting etc.), of physical environment (land contour, climate, plant and animal life, food grown, buildings, etc.). Sartre's "project" is in fact a directive, social activity that grows out of bodily activity and *is* the action of the body. When he makes the project primary and the body secondary he has got the flower before the root and has then cut the upward flow of life between them. If Sartre is following Marx, as he claims, he will have to begin with the root, namely, bodily processes, and understand that everything that grows up in human living is also a bodily process. Sartre says that the root is *need* with its projective goal.[85] But need is always a physical feeling, a bodily vector. Sartre writes of our "wrenching away"[86] of ourselves from the past—and in *Being and Nothingness* we wrench ourselves away from our bodies. But while such language vividly expresses the quality of resolute effort it should not and need not be converted into a past-present, body-mind dualism.

In my active project I stop thinking about my body as something solid and settled; but that does not mean that I leave it behind. Only that particular form of thinking is left behind or put aside.

Sartre wants to put the decision of freedom beyond the natural order; sign-processes for him transcend natural processes, and only man is creative and unpredictable. (We may ask how man can be held responsible, if not even he himself can predict what he will think or do, and if the tie of his thought to his body and action is contingent.) A naturalistic, Marxist view accepts decision as a fact. But a decision in man's case is a complex integration of vast masses of electronic events, most of them concentrated in the brain; and as an integration it therefore displays new qualities and relations not previously existent. Such novelty by definition cannot be predicted any more than the course of a particular quantum can be predicted. But that does not mean that increasing knowledge cannot comprehend the *range* of decision and the probability that this or that decision will be made. And if human need is to be fulfilled, such decision and action following from it must be increasingly understood and controlled.

Does this argument make any difference for practical action? An existential interpretation of man and freedom, in the hands of some, can block the road of scientific and philosophical inquiry and political action. It seems to say the following: We can get knowledge of the human body and other bodies, physical and biological. But man's spiritual world eludes the grasp of objective knowledge. Therefore socialism's task is to meet men's needs at the level of the natural order, leaving men free to develop themselves spiritually over and beyond that natural order. If man's internal freedom is a mystery, then why even look into it? Let the wind blow where it listeth, and if conditions like poverty, hunger, disease, and exploitation do not essentially affect freedom, why be concerned about them? Although Sartre expends much concern here, and argues that freedom *is* affected by such external conditions, he still says that it is essentially unaffected. But he cannot have it both ways.

A genuine dialectic requires, as Sartre proposes, an interaction of man, other men, and the world. And this means a point of contact, a common order, between the free subject and the body and between man and the natural order. The realistic and viable alternative to a rigid determinism—or what Sartre calls "an abstract

causalism"[87]—whether it be Hegelian or Marxist, is not an old-fashioned dualism or a modified dualism, such as Sartre's, but a flexible determinism in which man's purposive, cooperative, adaptive activity provides the main element of flexibility. For nature to be transformed, man must be in nature (and never out of it) and must possess the power of transforming it. Sartre's mistake is to assume that freedom means absolute indeterminism, whereas it ordinarily means only an order of activity wherein man is *partially* or *relatively* free of external determinations. To say that man partially determines himself is sufficient for common sense: a worker considers himself "free" to the extent that he is not compelled to spend every moment on the assembly line. Metaphysically this view need not introduce an exception to the principle that all events have causes. It simply asserts that *man is a cause among other causes.* And what is the character of man's power of causation? It is his power to select and assemble elements of experience and thought, to propose plans for action, to deduce and rehearse their consequences, to choose among the plans, and then to act to implement one of the plans. This means a *loose* determination and hence man's *relative* power in controlling present process as it emerges into future reality. This power of man is his creativity. While Sartre has insight into this creativity, he does not in his philosophy integrate it with the causal order of society and nature. Consequently his effort to bring together existentialism and Marxism suffers. It reflects not only his own relation to society but also the relation of many contemporary intellectuals to society. If a philosophy (such as Marx's or Lenin's or Mao Tse-tung's) is to have massive success, it must link itself to the masses; it must show an organic tie between thought and bodily action, between intellectual activity and the daily needs of men.

Sartre appears to agree with Marx's thesis that progress in history occurs as men consciously focus on and control those dark, oppressive forces that debase and deform men. Sartre in particular is concerned about the impotence and tensions suffered in the depths of childhood. Is there not then a great deal to be gained from a study of the processes and conditions of freedom and of the ways in which it is developed in child and adult? Sartre wants to affirm freedom but at the same time guard it from inquiry. This is a contradiction. To study it as such would be for Sartre to objectify it, and to objectify it is to destroy it. But if it is affirmed as existent,

then it has a discoverable structure. If it has no such structure, then it can be tossed into the same rubbish heap where Sartre has thrown the traditional concept of God.

Yet Sartre's emphasis on freedom, i.e., on man's own initiative and responsibility for himself and history, is timely. Perhaps at no other point in history has so much depended on man's intelligent control of himself and his world. The revolutions in modern weaponry, cybernetics, national liberation, and human rights all hold out great hope and hazard for the human race. In Western Europe and the U. S. an unregulated technology threatens man. Sartre's repudiation of passivity, fatalism, and blind trust in the general laws of history is a useful attitude and exhortation. Aside from his phenomenology of freedom, Sartre's belief in freedom is a significant and salutary determination of our own attitudes and action. By the sheer impact of his ideas and character, Sartre is perhaps without a peer among the Western European moralists of our time. But a belief in freedom does not as such require a disbelief in determinism. As we have tried to show, freedom is a form of power, a resilient and flexible habit moving toward, around, into, against, and through objects, and is in turn moved and affected by them. Is it then meaningful to speak of freedom or to urge men to be free or to be more free than they are? Of course it is.

We are necessitated to choose and be free, says Sartre. Recognition of that necessity means a candid acknowledgement of our natures and their limitations and possibilities. It means seeing ourselves concretely, in contemporary context and in historical depth, and knowing what we can and cannot do. Freedom is choice and voluntary action; but optimal freedom is recognition of the structure and process of choice in our concrete lives in a concrete history. We endanger our freedom when we give ourselves the illusion that our decisions operate above the causal order. In such case we are inclined to neglect the conditions of history and action. Put a "free" French intellectual in a Southern U. S. town with his "free" ideas and habits, and he will soon cease to be. If he survives, his freedom will become something quite different from what it was in Paris. The simple truth is that man is most free when he understands himself and his situation in a material way and when he accordingly acts most effectively to secure human fulfillment.

(2) *Individual and society.* Because he retains the notion of a completely autonomous subject, Sartre's notion of sociality is defective—though he goes far in repairing his earlier view. In *Being and Nothingness* he said that each man is a limit and threat to the other man and that respect for another's freedom is empty.[88] In *The Problem of Method* Sartre decries the metaphysical existence of collectives or groups but does say, with Marx, that "there are only men and real relations between men."[89] But whereas Marx believed that the human essence is "the ensemble of the social relations" and men's relations between one another are *internal* relations—Sartre seems to waver on this point. He is aware that the child internalizes the role imposed on him by the adults around him.[90] He also says that to comprehend another I must comprehend myself, i.e., I must grasp in a synthetic unity my own transcending project.[91] How do I understand the various acts in the behavior of another? By projecting myself into his situation, experiencing a comparable need, etc. Sartre's own words are significant here, as he describes his companion starting toward the window in a heated room:

> There is present here a synthetic conduct which, by unifying itself, *unifies before my eyes* the practical field of which we both are. . . . In every way, *if I am to perceive the unity which they give themselves,* I must myself feel the overheated atmosphere as a demand for freshness. . . . Thus comprehension is nothing more than my real life; it is the totalizing movement *which gathers together my neighbor, myself, and the environment in the synthetic unity of an objectification in process.*[92]

In this statement Sartre implies what he says elsewhere, that we know others *indirectly* because we know our own projects first and immediately.[93] But, in expressions like "before my eyes," "if I am to perceive," "gathers together my neighbor, myself, and my environment," he reveals that in spite of a Humean orientation he does believe that others are directly known and are internal to the individual person.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre concluded that "the essence of the relations between consciousness is not the *Mitsein;* it is conflict."[94] I cannot really know the Other in the freedom of his true self, i.e., the for-itself. I know him only as he is objectified, limited,

and embodied; in flight from his free look (which imprisons me), or in possession of his freedom (a possession which imprisons him), I vainly seek to reach him. I need him in order to define myself; yet I can never know him except as something other than what he really is. Here Sartre assumed a radical discontinuity between the self (a free act) and the body. In spite of the fact that the self aims at the embodiment of its desires, it can never fully succeed: the written can never reveal the essence of the writer. In spite of the fact that desire, through caress, aims at *"a double reciprocal incarnation"* and this "communion of desire" is realized[95]—Sartre still accentuates the antagonism between the I and the Other and the incommensurability between my internal freedom and the results of my project as enacted through my body. I cannot know the Other and the Other cannot know me because we are aboriginally alienated from our bodies and the other bodies comprising the physical world. Bodies can interact but selves cannot.

Such a dualism between man and other men in the earlier Sartre indicates what he now might identify as a dualism that is not natural to man but is peculiar to a class society. If I can communicate with another in the depths of sexual desire, what does this signify but that such communication is not fully determined by the alienation and antagonisms of men's working relations, commercial relations, and all the rest of class superstructure? Does it signify that man is a *communing being* (as Marx said) who, in directly perceiving the words, gestures, and other movements of the body of the Other, grasps a portion of his real, essential, free self? Whence arises such a profound feeling of alienation and despair in man if he is not initially in contact with the Other—not merely in a way that requires the Other as a mirror or confirmation of the ego, or that views the Other as a reflection or analogue of oneself, but in a relation wherein the I enacts in feeling the feeling-acts of the Other as its own? And how can social action be justified apart from this genuine sense of solidarity with the Other? Sartre's obsession with freedom and individuality is a feverish reaction against the infection of an oppressive, depersonalizing society. From the depths of his being he cries out against this. But in a sane society it may very well turn out that our freedom will be assessed quite differently. The Western concept of freedom has after all been nourished like an antibody in man in the context of tyranny—economic, political, religious, etc. What will happen

when that tyranny falls away and men live together as common owners and governors of themselves and their world?

Sartre's partial resolution of the split between the I and the Other occurs through sympathetic role-taking, through the use of common language in such a way that what the Other signifies to himself in his projective activity I can also signify to myself. Though he continues to deny that man has any "essence" or common nature, Sartre acknowledges that "real communication" is always possible between any two men or human groups.[96] Moreover, while a personal project cannot be conceptualized, it can be grasped by a process that "reproduces" the original, dialectical, creative movement.[97] Such "reproduction" by me of another's activity presumably requires some direct apprehension of it, just as my pictorial reproduction of a landscape requires some direct acquaintance with its lines and colors.

In Sartre's earlier writings a certain pessimism about social action pervaded his thought and naturally followed from the supposed solitariness of man. Although Sartre protested that he had "an optimistic toughness,"[98] that was an individualistic toughness. For society, Sartre held out little hope, for being (by nature) independent, man would be foolish to depend on others or on any "movement" of society. Man then was thought to be forlorn because there is no undergirding fixed human nature or God to guarantee values; and he was said to be anguish-stricken because he realizes that he as an individual is totally responsible for history.[99] This is of course one way of looking at man, and it is not without its heroic side. But is it justified by the facts? In his present work, in spite of his recognition of the social nature of man, a good deal of Sartre's forlornness lingers on. He writes from the perspective of a man who is not convinced that men really are and will be together in their quest for the fulfillment of human need. Courage and commitment to human causes cannot really be social virtues, either in origin or consequence, because the central part of man remains unsocial.

Sartre here is moving toward overcoming individualism; but a residue remains, still at war with his socialism. A dialectical understanding of man would seek *both* the cooperative and competitive, the creative and destructive factors in man's relations. Although Sartre recognizes the cooperative factors (e.g., communication), he minimizes these. The result is that he sees man as predominantly

indifferent or hostile to other men. Sartre fails to identify and discriminate clearly the basic, and universal social character of men and the hostility that arises in consequence of class relations. Because he continues to deny that man has a nature, it becomes imperceptibly easy for him to slip over to the conclusion that man is what his class society makes him. Over against this, Marx poses not man in his pure individual freedom but man in the ensemble of his social and productive relations, i.e., man who is essentially cooperative and creative. Of course Marx demands that man be studied concretely, so that man's conflict and his nature always appears differently. Even so, Marx postulates an invariant human nature struggling against the obstructions of a class society.

Sartre's picture of man begins with divided and alien human beings; he then urges us to transform this picture by creating ourselves anew and, in the process, creating socialism. But one cannot get to a socialist end from an individualist beginning. If an end is to emerge, it must in some sense be present, potentially, in the beginning. Marx's socialism, at least, is founded on the view that man is essentially and unchangeably *social*. Sartre's socialism may be called artistic or *ex nihilo* socialism. Why, we might ask, should man make just a choice? Why not choose fascism? Sartre may answer that man does not choose to be self-defeating, or that socialism is the only way in which to carry out a need-driven *praxis*. But, as we have tried to show, *praxis* is essentially social.

In an idealistic tradition dating from Descartes, Sartre assumes the priority of the individual ego, which then generates the world of others. This is a great mistake. From it follow all of Sartre's other mistakes, including the supposition that we can get to socialism by thinking and willing to do so. Contrary to the recent popular song, wishing will not make it so. Material conditions, shaping and being shaped by ideas, will make it so. The truth is that the self is not a discrete, autonomous thing prior to social relations but emerges within social processes. Social psychology and interpersonal psychiatry make this evident. I am *with* the Other, in dialectical relation to him. I do not understand him by first understanding myself; instead, I discover him, just as I discover myself, as an objective participant in an objective social process. I know him as an objective being standing over against me precisely because his objective differential features are felt by me in a subjective mode. I know myself as acting upon him and

as reflected back to me in his reactions to me. I and the Other emerge and grow in this mutually creative interaction. Thus Sartre's view (strong in the early work, weak here) that all human relations are essentially egocentric and exploitive is a perversion. It is a perversion produced by the prevailing egocentricity and exploitation of class society. Because this is taken to be final, or because Sartre's view of the human being, implicitly derived from this, is taken to be definitive, he can propose that we reach toward socialism only by individual acts of courageous desperation. But to move toward socialism in a realistic way, one must find the real foundation and the method of socialism—*in men, in men's relations, in the present*. This means that, so far we can, we must develop a normative science of man. Sartre's contribution is that he has given us a penetrating and often painful pathology of modern man. But this implies a science of health and a prescription for action—and that is our next step.

(3) *Toward a more determined view of freedom*. Central to Sartre's thesis is the idea that *man himself* signifies and hence creates the meaning of his act, and that this signifying act, the really significant feature of man, includes but surpasses all determinations.[100] This is a critical point of difference between Sartre and the Marxists; and it is by no means clear that on this point (as Sartre contends) Marx himself would agree with Sartre's existential loop or break in the causal lines of the world. Sartre sensibly points out that in studying man the proper procedure is to study man's characteristically human properties. Among these we find purposive activity.[101] Here the Marxist agrees. The question then remains open for investigation: what is the character of freedom? But Sartre argues from an *a priori* position: freedom by definition lies beyond investigation.

On the other side—as Sartre discerningly points out in *The Problem of Method*—one cannot validly explain or explain away freedom by an *a priori* appeal to a narrow determinism that reduces everything in the world to movements of pieces of matter. In a preceding section I have already sketched my own answer to the problem of freedom, holding that determinism can include the notion of freedom without self-contradiction. In a discussion at the Gramsci Institute in May, 1964, Sartre spoke of a "pure undetermined future." Naturally the future is now undetermined; to

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say otherwise is a contradiction. But that indetermination of possibility is now a *degree* of indetermination (i.e., vagueness) itself determined by past and present conditions and progressively transformed into clear and definite determination as the present activity creates and materializes possibility. Sartre himself describes this process. Present activity, determined definitely by the past but indefinitely by an idealized future (itself bounded) and by the indecisiveness of selective activity, moves toward the enactment of a new definiteness. Decision-followed-by-action is the creative determination of this indefiniteness; it is the resolution of the ambiguity that clogs the present. If this new definiteness were in complete detail determined in the past, it would be foolish to talk about time. Yet, according to Sartre, this is the way in which Marxists have talked.

A dialectical determinism such as indicated in Marx has the outlines for such a creative determinism. But it remains to be developed. Sartre's own efforts to bring freedom into dialectical relation to determinism—or, in his own terms, to unite being and knowledge—are a major effort in this direction. Although Sartre claims to begin from Marx's position, there is some question whether he does. But if Sartre's present view is a negation of the negative and static Marxism of the last twenty years—then where is the Marxist response that will absorb, negate, and transcend the Sartrean negation? Aside from his own errors and limitations, Sartre has done Marxism a service because in absorbing Marxism into own existential thought he has introduced a tension and a dialogue into Marxism, a tension that in recent decades has been denied and suppressed in the interest of "a united front," political and philosophical. A critical decision for the future of Marxism is whether and how Marxists will take up this dialogue themselves. Some Marxists have already taken up the dialogue and are moving toward an humanistic dialectic and determinism just as Sartre has been moving toward a dialectical humanism.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre declared: "freedom has no essence"; freedom is man's "nothingness of being"; "choice is always unconditioned."[102] He defined man as an intentional, independent activity choosing an end, revealing the world, breaking with all that is given (the past, the operative environment), negating the given, and being "absurdly" forced to choose. In choosing his self, man leaves his past self and others altogether

behind. In *The Problem of Method,* however, this idealistic genera-
tion of the self and the world out of an independent cocoon has
been more or less abandoned. Sartre's aim now is not the affirma-
tion of the individual's freedom and responsibility in the face of
the brute force of the in-itself—the capitalist state, Nazi occupation,
technology, mass culture, and the like. His aim is to bring the
individual to grips with the problems of his existence in society,
to find out how the existential human being can know his world.
But knowing is a transactional affair involving communication and
cooperation with other men. At this point Sartre's critique of
Marxism emerges. He accuses the Marxists of neglecting history
and sociology: the individual (in Marxism) is cut off from his
childhood, from the complex influence of material and cultural
conditions, from his human relations and groups, from class rela-
tions, from the conflicts and ambiguities of his social existence, and
from the unique ways in which he receives, integrates, and acts
back upon all these influences. In short, Marxists have not been
dialectical in understanding the individual.

A similar criticism can be directed at the earlier existentialism
of Sartre. If the Marxists tended to reduce the individual to a
determined historical and material order, the existentialists tended
to reduce that order to the individual. Extremists on each side
amplified the error. And each represented a different side of the
same error, i.e., a separation of theory and practice, of individual
and society—a blindness to the full, developing reality. The antago-
nism that forms the foundation for this error is not peculiar to
capitalist countries but cuts across all large, industrialized, techno-
logical societies. Sartre has been popular in America not so much
because he called for integrity, responsibility, and justice (for
these were not the dominant ideals in post-war America) but
because he expressed a protest against the constrictions of mass
society. To the extent that monolithic Marxism took hold in the
U.S.S.R. and Europe, it did so because it expressed a need for
solidarity and reassured the individual that in a period of stress
(since 1917) history was on his side. When revolutions were under
way in places like China and Cuba, it is striking that the dialectical
integration of theory and practice developed indigeneously, richly,
and adaptively, and indeed became "supple" and "patient." Simi-
larly, pragmatism, the social gospel, and socialism in the U.S., in
the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reflected the experimental

freedom and adaptiveness of a people not yet tightly organized or stratified. The errors in the interpretations of freedom and determinism have grown out of divisions within societies and between societies. We can correct the errors only as we overcome the divisions. We will begin to see freedom as a process that is determined only when we ourselves begin to determine freedom within and through our own societies and within and through world society as a whole.

(4) *The uses of freedom.* Europeans and U.S. Americans have responded to Sartre in the past because he confirmed in an intense and dramatic way their faith in individual freedom, in both thought and action. He also sensitively reflected the exploitations of man by man. Sartre's current conversation with Marxism is arresting because he brings this western democratic tradition (which was present in Russia too in the 19th century) into the context of socialism. "The original dialectical movement," he says, is "in the individual and in his enterprise of producing his life, of objectifying himself."[103] So far as we now know, dialectic does not exist independently of man, according to Sartre, although he leaves open the possibility of a dialectics of nature. And dialectic for Sartre certainly does not exist independently of the *praxis* of individual men. What can the proposition, "Man makes his own history," mean except this?

Politically, this means "different roads to socialism"—a fact that Marx and Lenin recognized. Khrushchev was led to articulate this principle precisely because large numbers of individuals in socialist countries, given their distinctive conditions and problems, insisted on solving their problems in their own ways. Similarly Mao Tse-tung's dissident communist group in the early 1920's in China insisted on making history in their own way—not by appealing to the proletariat primarily, but by appealing to the peasants.

But Sartre's work goes farther. If the Stalinists generalized Marxism, then Sartre has individualized it. Of course Sartre now acknowledges that man is social—but it is not unequivocally clear how others are *essential* to us. To show that man is free, Sartre cites as an example a Negro member of a ground crew who, forbidden to pilot a plane, nonetheless takes a plane into the air. But what about an old Negro in Mississippi, a child with yaws in the Congo, or a Catholic mother in the slums of Naples? Do not

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their social realities essentially determine them? How much freedom do they possess in practice? Is not their relative freedom a function of their relations to others? Here, as in his earlier work, Sartre seems to rely on an emotive assertion that man by nature is free. One often has the feeling that Sartre is portraying the freedom of the French intellectual or of western European man.

What ought to be the common human purpose of freedom? In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre defined man as "the being by whom values exist," and the criterion that makes one act take precedence over another is "the degree of consciousness which it possesses of its ideal goal."[104] This was not an ethics of ends but of intentionality. For all acts are equally doomed in their efforts to fulfill themselves in the world. Sartre left open the question as to whether individual freedom might serve a higher value. In this earlier work it is not always clear whether Sartre is describing what man is, or ought to be, or both. In *The Problem of Method* Sartre states that the dialectical knowing of man has not been established in experience and therefore all men utter "gross error."[105] Thus, so long as we are not authentically and thoroughly human, we cannot know what the aim of our existence is. But here Sartre recognizes that we can know something about ourselves and our human goals: our existences proceed by *praxis*, and *praxis* is dialectical and creative. This means that man is and ought to be active in the project of transforming his need-in-the-world.[106] In arguing that "knowledge" is subordinate to "existence," and is abstract and derivative, Sartre sounds an appropriate warning against Marxists (and others) who want to take a particular product of human activity and absolutize that as "human nature"—forgetting that it is man himself who is the source of such a product and can question it. Tyranny, indeed, is the claim that some particular human expression is normative and the coercive imposition of this pattern upon the socially creative activity of others. But the genuine norm of human existence cannot be imposed on men; it is already inherent in them. Does this mean that society should do nothing for the individual, and let him do as he pleases? By no means. Every human existent, because it is social, ought to cooperate with other existents to provide conditions favorable for the development of the projective freedom of all.

Does Sartre say this? Yes and no. He strongly implies it: man is a "practical organism" who with others freely makes his own

history. On the other hand, he accentuates the creation of society out of individual effort, the non-conceptualizable character of freedom, and the evils of any kind of force or coercion. Sartre writes in the tradition stressing the "free association" of democratic theory. What would he have us do in educating children, dealing with illegal segregationists, defending a socialist state from internal and external enemies, handling criminals, and overcoming exploitation where men work? Surely force—even violent— is sometimes justified in such circumstances. But because Sartre puts freedom beyond determinations, he leaves the implication that—though we are and ought to be social in satisfying our needs—every person faces the solitary and anguish-laden task of making himself free. Moreover, because he holds that freedom cannot be understood save by the individual in an active "comprehension" of his free act, what leads us to disbelieve that all social action (in primary groups, collectives, government, etc.) ought to be guided by a hands-off policy toward the individual person? Sartre may answer that every man is free and responsible and can be relied on to enter freely and responsibly into association with others for the purpose of self-government and increasing freedom. But his own plays give evidence that this is not so. Then what? Can men be made more free, and can they help others to be freer, through collective action? Sartre seems to say so. But in saying so he is saying that freedom is determined. When we see how man's freedom is determined by current capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism, we see that it is all too determined!

The logic of Sartre's own position leads us to the conclusion that freedom is a partial value and, at least as thus far conceived, an instrumental value. In fighting for and upholding our freedom, we ambiguously reveal the oppressions under which we suffer and also point beyond our present state to a world relieved of such oppression. But because we cannot be sure of the exact character of that new world, we cannot know the nature and role of freedom in it. "Freedom" for us, at least in the non-socialist world, will always be tainted with bourgeois connotations because it grows up in a bourgeois context. It rather clearly means the removal of all the bonds that bind and dehumanize us; and it less clearly suggests a non-alienated society in which freedom, whatever it may be, will have shed most if not all of its western European, American, and existential characteristics. If he is a dialectician, Sartre must say

that the purpose of freedom is to transform existing society into a socialist society in which the freedom of man itself will be transformed. That means that now we only see through a glass darkly and that what we take as freedom cannot be an absolute value or a necessary clue to the nature of man.

Nonetheless, it should be said that Sartre's emphasis helps to underline and recall the *ethical* impetus of Marxism, which derives its driving power from the conviction that men *can* make history (and that history is on man's side). Sartre wants to give the initiative back to individual men rather than to leave it with History or some System or Nation or Party where it has been lodged. Yet Sartre himself does not move on to the next requisite moment in this development, and that is to deal with concrete issues like the development of consciousness in the exploited or the development of free *praxis* in children and adolescents and adults. He leaves the discussion at a relatively abstract level. "Freedom" is not analyzed as a political action. Yet without knowledge of how we are free and can improve our freedom we remain blind victims of ourselves, of others, and of our world.

(5) *The challenge of Sartre.* In *Being and Nothingness* in 1943 Sartre declared that man most deeply desires to fuse his creativity with the world so as to found a totality that is not contingent. He claimed to bridge the in-itself and for-itself—"an hiatus at the very core of the idea of being"[107]—but did so by "nihilation." But this seemed to be merely a reaffirmation of the hiatus. In 1946 Jean Wahl observed: "There may yet be a Sartre who will go beyond ambiguity."[108] *The Problem of Method* is an effort to go beyond ambiguity, to supersede the duality of Sartre's earlier work, and to bring the individual subject into a creative unity with others and his world. I do not believe Sartre is successful in this. One reason is that if one begins with a world primordialy divided into subject and object, all endeavors to close the division are doomed to inconclusiveness. One cannot begin with individualistic premises and reach socialist conclusions. The conquest of ambiguity will elude Sartre (and all of us) so long as man is in fact alienated from others and the world. Philosophy reflects man's situation. If his situation is fraught with conflict, then his philosophy will incorrigibly reflect those conflicts.

Still, Sartre has taken a big stride toward the conquest of

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ambiguity. Can we not say, without untoward optimism, that this progress in Sartre's thought mirrors the progress in society, from a world sharply polarized into fascist and anti-fascist forces and a world therefore at war, *toward* a world (not the whole world) of peaceful coexistence, the revival of humanism, dialogue and new ideas, diversified socialism, and a renaissance of imaginative Marxism? Sartre's old themes of anguish, forlornness, despair, separation, loneliness, nausea, and the like do not altogether disappear in *The Problem of Method*. But they give way to the themes of knowledge, "totalized becoming," cooperative activity, and vigorous struggle with the problem of human need. When Sartre deals with the hole in man's stomach, namely, man's basic needs, instead of with the "hole of being in the heart of Being,"[109] his words make good sense. When he addresses himself to the concrete problem of how knowledge is related to practice and how a Marxist approach might be integrated with an existentialist approach to man—then he speaks forcefully, if not always convincingly. For he is addressing himself to the vital topics of our times.

Now it is the turn of the Marxists to speak and to meet Sartre on his own ground, the ground of Marxism itself. If Sartre's challenge to Marxism proves a creative challenge to Marxists, this will not be the first time that a system of thought and practice has been stirred and improved by a lively critic and heretic. A heretic is one who (from the Greek) is "able to choose"—and this is precisely the kind of person with whom Marx, identifying with Prometheus and Spartacus and Kepler, identified himself. Existential choice is what Sartre proposes to restore to the tradition of Marxism. Will the Marxists choose this? And on what terms?

NOTES

1 Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Problem of Method*. Translated from the French with an Introduction by Hazel E. Barnes. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1963, p. xxxiv. Hereafter, *PM*.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

3 *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

5   *Ibid.*, p. 14.
6   *Ibid.*, p. 17.
7   *Ibid.*, p. 18.
8   *Ibid.*, p. 20.
9   *Ibid.*, p. 30.
10   *Ibid.*, p. 83.
11   *Ibid.*, p. 177.
12   *Ibid.*, p. 61.
13   *Ibid.*, p. 38.
14   *Ibid.*, p. 178.
15   *Ibid.*, p. 90.
16   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness.* An Essay on Phenom-enological Ontology. Translated and with an Introduction by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Philosophical Library, pp. 408, 615. Hereafter, *BN*.
17   *PM*, p. 65.
18   *Ibid.*, p. 61.
19   *Ibid.*, p. 28.
20   *Ibid.*, p. 181.
21   *Ibid.*, p. 83.
22   *Ibid.*, p. 37.
23   *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
24   *Ibid.*, p. 48.
25   *Ibid.*, p. 48.
26   *Ibid.*, p. 90.
27   *Ibid.*, p. 175.
28   *Ibid.*, p. 31.
29   *Ibid.*, p. 53.
30   *Ibid.*, p. 62.
31   *Ibid.*, p. 62.
32   *Ibid.*, p. 101.
33   *Ibid.*, p. 146.
34   *Ibid.*, p. 147.
35   *Ibid.*, p. 87.
36   *BN*, p. 457.
37   *PM*, p. 151.
38   *Ibid.*, p. 157.
39   *BN*, p. 627.
40   *Ibid.*, p. 67.
41   *PM*, p. 151.
42   *Ibid.*, p. 93.
43   *Ibid.*, p. 96.
44   *Ibid.*, p. 99.

45   *Ibid.*, p. 98.
46   *Ibid.*, p. 59.
47   *Ibid.*, p. 101.
48   *Ibid.*, p. 11.
49   *Ibid.*, p. 115.
50   *Ibid.*, p. 125.
51   *Ibid.*, p. 126.
52   *Ibid.*, p. 152.
53   *Ibid.*, p. 155.
54   *Ibid.*, p. 157.
55   *Ibid.*, p. 161.
56   *Ibid.*, p. 168.
57   *Ibid.*, p. 156.
58   *Ibid.*, p. 174.
59   *Ibid.*, p. 175.
60   *Ibid.*, p. 158.
61   *Ibid.*, p. 159.
62   *Ibid.*, p. 159.
63   *Ibid.*, p. 159.
64   *Ibid.*, p. 160.
65   *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.
66   *Ibid.*, p. 112.
67   *Ibid.*, p. 112.
68   *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 177, 181.
69   *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.
70   *Ibid.*, p. 177.
71   *Ibid.*, p. 87.
72   *BN*, 442.
73   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism*. Translated by Bernard Frecht-
     man. New York: Philosophical Library, 1947, pp. 20-21. Here-
     after, *E*.
74   *PM*, p. 93.
75   *Ibid.*, p. 133.
76   *Ibid.*, p. 151.
77   *Ibid.*, p. 159.
78   *Ibid.*, p. 151.
79   *Ibid.*, p. 99.
80   *Ibid.*, p. 152.
81   *Ibid.*, p. 126.
82   *Ibid.*, p. 62.
83   *BN*, pp. 326-327.
84   *Ibid.*, p. 338.
85   *PM*, p. 171.

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86   *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 100.
87   *Ibid.*, p. 158.
88   *BN*, p. 88.
89   *PM*, p. 76.
90   *Ibid.*, p. 60.
91   *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155, 171.
92   *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 155; italics mine.
93   *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
94   *BN*, p. 429.
95   *Ibid.*, pp. 391, 396.
96   *PM*, pp. 170-174.
97   *Ibid.*, p. 170.
98   *E*, p. 40.
99   *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26, 21-22.
100   *PM*, pp. 152, 156, 165-166, 172.
101   *PM*, p. 157.
102   *BN*, pp. 438, 441, 479.
103   *PM*, p. 161.
104   *BN*, p. 627.
105   *PM*, p. 111.
106   *Ibid.*, p. 171.
107   BN, p. 621.
108   Jean Wahl, *A Short History of Existentialism*. Translated from the French by Forrest Williams and Stanley Maron. New York: Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 30.
109   *BN*, p. 617.

VI.

ALIENATION AND SOCIALISM

Miklós Almasi

In socialism we cannot talk of "pure" phenomena of alienation; behind each of our problems there loom the distortions brought about by the personality cult. Not only the phenomena visible on the surface—such as the violations of legality, the respect for the leaders as "superhuman"—must be spoken of here, but also the deep-seated problems of the structure of the State and economic processes.

It cannot be our task here to survey the conservationist organization of Stalinist theory and practice, which gave rise to alienation; we wish to stress a single essential factor: the one-sided exaggeration of the role of the State. Stalin's idea that the State dies away by being constantly "strengthened" is well known. In practice, this paradox led to the overdevelopment of centralized bureaucracy and the proliferation of the coercive apparatus, i.e., instead of the State's tending to die away, its petrifying rigidity began to prevail and spontaneous initiative was suppressed. "Direct democracy," achieved through the active participation of the revolutionary people considered so important by Lenin, disappeared from practice and became an obsolete slogan. And let us add that these distortions which penetrated the economic structure of society were not yesterday's faults; their effort is still being felt today. We still struggle against them; in many instances we have not yet even discovered their distorting character. This is why the study of the phenomenon of alienation only in the external facts of the "cult" indicates a superficial way of looking at things. The alienation of the leaders is only one outward phenomenon of distortion of the structure. Because the leaders dispose over the objective power of the social forces of production, and the active public life of a socialist democracy does not assist and put a check on them, the difference disappears between the capabilities of the individual

persons and the possibilities inherent in the concentrated forces of production of society. In such cases, the power of the personality appears, in an alienated form, as a force of society as a whole; and not only the leader holds himself to be all-powerful, but, because of the tapering off of socialist democracy, the masses can no longer separate the objective social forces from the personal capabilities of the leaders either. This is the source of the oft-mentioned factor in the personality cult: people transfer the facts of social evolution and the power of evolution to the personality of a leader, and even try to discover its essence there.

Much more fundamental and as yet little explored as far as today's problems are concerned, is that overcentralization, the over-expansion of the role of the State, not only had a harmful effect on the development of socialist democracy but distorted and pushed towards alienation the productive activities of people too. In short, in the one-sided system of instructions from above, minimum scope was left for individual initiative and individual decision. The workers and local leaders—foremen, managers—faded into mere executors of instructions. The rigid, one-sided treatment of the objective laws of economic planning put a brake on initiative from below, on the élan of labor, and greatly contributed to apathy and indifference—the groundstones of the phenomena of alienation. The Twentieth and Twenty-Second Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union opened the door to a healthy evolution in this area too, but in dealing with the theoretical and practical facts of the deformation of the economic structure, as well as in the work of reconstruction and reorganization, we are still at the very beginning of the process. We have now arrived at the level at which examination may begin of the fundamental principles of the Stalinist economic structure and the elaboration of a healthier structure. Consequently, an attitude which sees the faults in the past only is of necessity only a hindrance and leads to sterility. Our present struggles, as well as the theoretical and practical roots of our difficulties, may also be explained by the evils of this inheritance. Today we have only come far enough to surmise and to experiment with the socio-economic forms which may accelerate the healthy evolution of socialism. We cannot assert that in the building of direct democracy in the economy and in public life we have overcome the distortions caused by the person-ality cult. We are proceeding in this direction, but the material

and social structure of alienation is still with us today. (Let us consider such problems as fear of individual responsibility and the fetishism of supervision: these are the two poles of the same socio-economic organization that bears within itself the objective conditions for alienation; we have taken only the first uncertain steps towards overcoming it.)

The next aspect of alienation to be considered is the separation of public life from private life, or the creation of an artificial abyss between them. The system of bourgeois society results in a society of isolated, atomized private individuals, for whom only an extremely limited participation in public life is left—the opportunity offered, from time to time, by elections or demonstrations. The progressive parties, as well as individual artists, have always protested—though mainly without success—against this atomizing influence and for revival of the public man, the *"citoyen."* Only the communist parties succeeded in exploding this alienated private life and freeing people to act as social human beings. In the Soviet Union, at the time of the socialist revolution, private and public life were united, the formation of the new society became a part of everyday life, and—at least for some time—the rigid dividing wall disappeared between private life on the one hand and public life and public activity on the other. However, as socialism became stabilized, the objective opportunity receded more and more of private and public life being one, of moving with natural spontaneity from one's own life into the great web of history in formation. With the revolutionary situation past, quite a few new elements intervened between private and public life. Partly through the normal functioning of the socialist social order, partly because of unnecessary bureaucratization, a direct relationship could arise only as a rare exception in the life of the man in the street, although for the Communist, this unity could be created through a more elevated revolutionary morale. Out of the distortions of the personality cult, public life also acquired a number of alienated traits, and this tendency contributed to the isolation of private life. But the practice of the personality cult worked in a different direction, its goal was to maintain the direct unity of private and public life, and to achieve this it tolerated private interests only to a small extent. With one-sided use of moral and ideological motives, material incentives were relegated to the background. The *raison d'état*, class duties and the workers' consciousness were exaggerat-

edly invoked, whereas individual interest would have sufficed to awaken susceptibility towards the common interest. As a consequence, the task of representing the common interest and engaging in public activity often existed in an alienated form, as a mere official duty, as an opportunist instrument of careerism or as a product of material or political pressure. Although, under the influence of liberating forces of socialism, people endeavoured to create a social public life, the neglect of the objective intermediary links which occurred here, or the one-sided fetishism of formal prescriptions, deflected this endeavour in the direction of formalized public life. The separation of the "I as a private person" from the "I as an official" and their conflict on various levels were a consequence of this alienation. A solution may be reached here by extending socialist democracy, widening the sphere of individual responsibility, and making possible spontaneous activity.

Alienation and Play

Before proceeding we have to clear up a misunderstanding. When the socialist or communist liquidation of alienation is mentioned, some mean that the fundamental difference between leisure and working time will disappear and work will be turned into some sort of play. But those theories which foresaw the liberation of mankind through making toil more playful—such thinkers and artists of the Enlightenment as Schiller, Mozart, and later the utopian socialist Fourier—were wrong, partly because they saw only the distorting effect of the division of labor and did not recognize the formative power of work. Protesting against the mutilation of man by the division of labor, they placed their hopes in the illusory freedom of play and not in the transformation of the conditions of labor. From this the second error followed. Work can never be play, because play stands outside the chain of objective necessity. The fundamental characteristic of play is that man, if he errs, may "re-play" the play, he may even "outwit" the rules, because he has made these rules himself. The freedom of play is a subjective freedom. Work, on the other hand, as "metabolism with nature" (Marx), is based on the observation of the laws of nature and on their clever application, its essence being provided by a relationship of objective causality.

However, the "necessary" character of work is not identical with

alienation; on the contrary, the final and complete liquidation of alienation will be brought about through the human evolvement of work, through people finding in work the satisfaction of their own passions and interests; in other words, they will be able to realize themselves in work and not see in it some task which is alien to them. "Real freedom, the activity of which is work, is the self-realization of the individual and his objectivation," wrote Marx. This means that through work man realizes himself in the objective world, transfers his aims to nature, makes the world his own and through this also transforms himself. These liberated forms of work occur today in only a few special areas such as artistic work. In communism this will be a general tendency. But there too the difference between work and leisure will remain, and the combined role of the two, aiming towards each other and mutually enriching each other, will shape the evolvement of the whole human being.

Playful work was an illusion of the Enlightenment. Yet—as a progressive tradition—it became part and parcel of Marxist common thought and even found a place in the ideas formed of communist society. From a progressive illusion, it has become a misleading dogma. In the alienated world of bourgeois society, the progressive theory of playful work has only achieved the postponement of the struggle against alienation: until work becomes play, in the Utopian perspective, nothing can be done against alienation. Because of this it has become—even if not admittedly—a rigidly thwarting, even reactionary, dogma. Incidentally, in the imperialist period of capitalism the decadent form of play has evolved in the form of wanton, cruel play, which turns its back on social activity, responsibility and morality (we are thinking here of the various forms of the *"action gratuite"*). And this playfulness is itself an alienated phenomenon: man feels happy in the moral and ideological void, he begins to enjoy his own disintegration. These two forms of play then become interwoven, presenting a false perspective of man in flight from alienation: he arrives from whence he has fled. For example, the bureaucrat likes to play too, with seals, documents, and clients; he finds pleasure in self-expression, such as exact and flowery composition and inhuman formalities, which are also "playful" in themselves. And if parasitic playfulness and bureaucratic playfulness differ in their social essence and are even contradictory sociological phenomena, they

still have a common root: both are manifestations of an emptiness alien to life. In the human evolvement of work the alienation will have to be overcome in different ways.

Division of Labor and the Integrity of Man

The most important social source of alienation, operating under socialism as well as capitalism, is the division of labor. After the liquidation of exploitation, it is the effects of the division of labor that slow down the process during which work must change from "the semblance of spontaneous activity" (Marx) to true spontaneous activity. The division of labor—in which the worker mechanically executes some minute part of the work process and plays the role of a cog in a process which has become incomparably bigger than he—has always been a symbol of capitalist alienation. And modern large-scale industry with its assembly lines and the intensification of mass production has been strengthening this tendency to an ever-increasing extent.

The division of labor does not, of course, make its alienated influence felt in such a primitive form only, but manifests itself in other socio-psychological phenomena too, in one way or another, common to the particularities of alienation. There is, for instance, the system of social roles, with one person assuming innumerable roles: at home he is the father of a family, then a passenger, then an employee, then part of a work process, then a private citizen. However I do not agree with the sociological idea which maintains that man is internally completely torn apart among these roles and only "pretends" them; the truth is that the same man takes part in each "role"—i.e., in the activity systems prescribed by the division of labor—but with different parts of himself. Under capitalism this internal disruption, the dissolution of integrity, is extreme; people lose the kernel of their personality.

Socialism has changed a great deal in this relationship, but the alienating effect of the systems of roles caused by the division of labor, still makes itself felt; integrity cannot be completely achieved as yet. Class-conscious workers, leaders who have matured to socialists, are already the protagonists of the new ideology and morality in the plant—but find it quite natural to live in petty bourgeois conditions at home. This double mode of existence is not even disturbing to them, because it may become two sufficiently separate

systems of roles in their lives. In the long run, a conflict may arise between the two ideologies and moralities, but the example clearly demonstrates the "dividedness" according to roles. The converse of this phenomenon is the showing off of an artificial, snobbishly original personality. In this case too it is the unity of the personality that has dissolved, and the creation of the impression of a forceful personality is attempted through all sorts of assumed postures, acting a behavior and ideology alien to one's personality. These two poles have only been weakened by socialism but have not been abolished. The internal unity of the personality, its complete integrity, can only evolve after the dissolution of the alienating influence of the division of labor.

Finally, routine must also be mentioned as one of the aspects of the division of labor also operative in our society. Well-practiced, routine work is the precondition of every continuous activity. But the moment the individual movements begin to act of their own accord, when man cannot vary with new features what he has practiced, when he cannot do something new that has not been seen before, then routine becomes an alienated skill, it becomes independent of the individual's personality and even rules over him. (Routine does not appear, of course, in the performance of work only, but also in various other domains of everyday life. Even in many moral acts routine takes the place of acting oneself and acting honestly, and in political action it is very often routine that decides and not a firm ideological foundation.)

But what can socialism do here? Obviously, we cannot renounce modern production methods. Here too the further intensification of the division of labor is the ruling tendency, even if in the long run this is tempered by automation and by more advanced mechanization. Marx once thought that a worker oppressed by a trade or a mechanical operation could be freed from the harmful effect of the division of labor if he could change his employment freely from time to time. This is indeed the best medicine theoretically; the division of labor harms a man most if he becomes insensible through monotonous operation, the never-ending repetition of a minute part of a process, if he develops and uses his mental and physical faculties one-sidedly and superficially. Since then modern big industry has brought forth such a complicated branching out of specialization that a change of employment would be very difficult within the particular branch of industry. For the time being

the consensus is that it is impossible to develop a universal nucleus of knowledge which can be utilized with a little "additional learning" in any trade.

Some Marxist thinkers conclude from this that there is for the time being no medicine against the "secondary effects" of alienation. Yet it is only apparently that we are left to our own devices in the Marxist solution of the question. In his last writings, in his speeches and articles on the problems of strengthening the Soviet State, Lenin dealt again and again with the struggle against bureaucracy, against the fetishism of work organization, and from these writings numerous methodological and essential lessons can be learned.

The essence of Lenin's train of thought and policy is that the alienating effect of the division of labor can be defeated by developing the natural social components of human activities, and transforming the millions into "makers of society." It can be seen that for Lenin alienation was not a question of technical development but a problem of social practice and the shaping of consciousness. Let us look at a simple example. The worker who a hundred years ago was a mere prisoner of increasing exploitation through mechanization was in a much more alienated state than the one who fought for better working conditions in the trade union movement. And, again, fewer fetishizing forces influenced the revolutionary fighter. It follows from our example that if the worker has an opportunity to shape the organizational conditions of his work, if he can on some level have a say in the production of the goods which he manufactures, in the "policy" and economy of his plant, the shaping of his own conditions of living—then the effect of alienation is immediately reduced. In this way the alienation caused by performing a small part of a process, by the division of labor, may be bridged over, and a contact may be found with the whole. Personal participation in the wider connexions—effective social action—frees man from alienation, whereas being limited to immediate work—however comfortable that work may become, and however short a time it may last—will only increase alienation.

During the years of the personality cult, the social factors in human activity evolved mainly in a fetishistic form. It was the task of those "in office" to deal with society as a whole; it was they, the leaders, who both defined and carried out this task. As an example,

work competition began in Hungary and especially in the Soviet Union as a spontaneous movement, but very soon it became an official movement, to a large extent with prefabricated percentages and with "put-up" people, often with compulsory pledges—and so the spontaneous activity of the participants became unimportant and the social aspects of their work were turned into bureaucratic data. Superfluous bureaucratization did not lead people towards social fulfillment of their personality, but locked them back into their work and private life. The internal forces of socialism did not permit this tendency to become fully effective; the distortions to the personality cult could not entirely remodel society.

In the fight against alienation the dialectic of state-social tasks and individual-spontaneous activity plays an important role. Not long before his death, Lenin defined the components of this dialectic. In the debate on the development of the trade unions he drew attention to this contradiction. On the one hand, single groups of workers have to be given the possibility of defending their legitimate rights even against the State, and on the other, the trade unions must assist the socialist State in the development of its economy. As is known, Trotsky, in opposition to Lenin, took the view that this dialectic had to be discarded and the trade unions "nationalized" (i.e., their character as safeguards of the workers' interests abolished). And although Stalin fought resolutely against Trotskyism, in practice he still realized this principle of the one-sided nationalization of trade unions. Through this—and through the general political attitude which accompanied it—the active participation of the working class in the direction of production, building democracy in the plant, shaping its own way of living and social position, became atrophied. All this made it possible for the harmful effects of the division of labor to come again to the fore. Thus, the economy of real social relationships could not develop. And the tasks indicated by Lenin—for example in the case of the trade unions—have remained tasks to this day; we are proceeding in this direction but have taken only the first steps towards execution of this legacy.

I believe that in Lenin's thoughts the salient point of the struggle against alienation is present: the awakening and evolvement of interest in "society as a whole," of the opportunity to act. What concerns us here is not only the evaluation of the activities of the

trade unions, but the more general viewpoint according to which the construction of socialism was planned as the union of popular movement and of direction on the level of the State.

Technical Development as Cause of Alienation

In connexion with the above train of thought the technological theory of alienation can rate only a comment. I believe that I have shown that Lenin's posing of the question implicitly answered the argument that the rapid spread of machine culture made the alienation valid for both systems as a kind of cosmic destiny. But let us briefly examine these objections too. To state the essence of this theory in the style of a textbook: as the quantity of machines grows, man becomes more and more adjunct to the equipment, a passive part of the mechanical processes; he is at the mercy of some unwieldy mechanism largely incomprehensible to him. And this tendency on a world-wide scale, is affecting not only capitalism but socialism as well, since the same technical and scientific achievements are applied in the latter. To this pessimism of bourgeois sociology Marx and Lenin have opposed, as we have seen, the liberation of the social activity of man; alienation can only win if man fails to struggle against it on a social scale, if he does not defeat it again and again, if he does not constantly humanize the newest achievements of technology. It is already a commonplace contention of bourgeois sociology that, for example, our everyday articles—telephone, radio, television—all operate as alienating technical devices. Well, this commonplace may be answered by everyday truth. The telephone becomes an instrument of alienation only if man can—for other social reasons—no longer speak, even without the telephone, to other men with natural directness; then the impersonality of the telephone serves this depersonification well. But if man maintains his normal personal relationships, then the telephone serves these too. The same applies to television. If the theatre is unable to offer more than television can give in the way of human, social atmosphere, then it obviously separates the viewer from direct experience. But then he would become separated from the theatre even if there were no television, because he can be bored at home too. The technical devices serve to alienate. only if the alienated way of living has already developed in people, in which case the new instruments will strengthen this tendency.

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However, one aspect of this false bourgeois theory deserves attention: every new technical discovery has to be humanized by society, which has to fight against those effects that further alienation and for those that tend to liberate social activity, through the evolvement of spontaneous activity, the broadening of democracy and the elaboration of the natural capabilities.

The theories on the relation between technology and alienation have a more philosophic projection too, which is represented by Sartre and by Lucien Goldmann among others. In refutation Marxist critics are lagging a bit behind (I am referring to the pertinent chapters of Garaudy's book, *Les perspectives de l'humanisme*). In wording the philosophic arguments, the author uses apparently Marxist categories. All work is the "objectification" of man; man realizes himself in objects, partly by converting natural resources into objects that satisfy human needs, partly by creating objects to assist him in his struggle with nature. In the course of technical evolution, then, "the mass of objects" becomes greater and greater, with the result that man becomes less and less important in relation to the objects that surround him and are the products of his own work. And this tendency acts in socialism too; it cannot be avoided there either. Of course, this train of thought is only partly based on Marxism, where we make a difference between "objectification" (*Versachlichung*) and "alienation" (*Entfremdung, Selbstentfremdung*) in regard to work. Objectification is characteristic of all work; work is the forming of the objective world; through it man transfers himself (his physical, mental and social capabilities) into the world of objects and realizes himself there. Alienation, on the other hand, is a phenomenon of social consciousness. The former does not necessarily cause the latter, for objectification has been the essence of human activity for thousands of years, while alienation is a modern phenomenon. Socialism is confronted with this problem only insofar as the new technical-industrial development raises the necessity of reforming the social organization and the social power of the individual, viz., insofar as the difference and relationship between objectification and alienation have to be "balanced out" on the basis of new factors.

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The Petty Bourgeois—from a New Point of View

When human relationships become alienated in bourgeois society—for instance, isolation predominates in human relations—then mechanical devices too serve alienation; the marriage-broker business for example, substitutes for individual love. Decisive in the fight against alienation is the widening of the social power of man —of the worker—and the fulfillment of his human essence; it depends on the extent to which the objective process of production can be subjected to the social influence of the individual.

The phenomenon known and debated under the name of "socialist petty bourgeoisie" is connected, in my view, with the problems of alienation which have been discussed here.

It is primarily behind petty-bourgeois tendencies that we sense the mainsprings of alienation. In themselves, material and social possibilities and a rise in the standard of living do not necessarily lead to a petty-bourgeois mentality. A revolutionary naturally remains one even if he possesses a refrigerator and a television set. He becomes a petty bourgeois if the overwhelming part or the very essence, of his interest is absorbed by the acquisition and enjoyment of these goods and by showing off with them. At the very moment that the social interest and activity of the individual become bureaucratized, when his spontaneous social activity is pushed into the background as a result of exaggerated official measures—these merely material objectives become independent, become aims in themselves. To be more exact, those material possibilities come to the fore and begin to act in people's everyday lives, propelling them in the direction of the petty bourgeoisie. If an activity having social significance becomes attractive, then the danger of becoming a petty bourgeois subsides. This is why the continuous raising of the standard of living has to be accom·panied by a social advance of man, a freeing of the social ramification of his work, activities and entertainment, the full development of his social self. The pernicious Stalinist legacies have to.be eliminated in this field too; people must have the opportunity to "interfere," to take an interest in an autonomous public life. As we have only just begun the liquidation of this legacy, the distortion still exercises an influence at present in the surface form of a petty-bourgeois mentality.

The Changed Role and Effect of the Fetish of Money

The other great fosterer of alienation—besides the effects of the division of labor—is money with its economic functions and fetishistic character. The inhuman power of money, its magical fetish-like appearance, has largely vanished or is on the wane. Innumerable paths have opened up for man to get ahead; material progress is only one—though important—motive of the many, and obviously does not act with the same merciless compulsion as under capitalism. This power will continue to diminish under the combined effect of the socialist economy, social norms and ideological transformation. Today those who wish to use only their money to make up for their lack of talent and their emptiness have become a laughing stock, and legitimate forms of getting ahead in society remain closed to them. In this primary respect the fetish of money has ceased to exist. But its secondary effects can still be felt.

The dominant role of the universal equivalent will remain for some time under socialism—even if with a diminishing tendency. As Marx said, in the exchange of goods and in the relationships of distribution under socialism, the same principle is valid as under capitalism: the exchange of equivalent goods. "A defined quantity of work of a certain form is exchanged for the same quantity of work of a different form." The universal equivalent representing an objective economic measurement—money, or the rationally determined labor time, governs this exchange. In both cases the individual quality of work can be taken into account socially only to the extent that it incorporates socially necessary labor time—since only to that extent is it exchangeable. For our problem this means that individual work—and way of living too—must first be referred to an abstract, general formula if we are to discover the social value of their individual character. The products of work cannot be exchanged directly, but only by referring them to the universal equivalent. As in this the germ of the secondary forms of alienation is already hidden. This can be ascertained from the fact that Marx saw in the survival of the universal equivalent the survival of bourgeois right and of the relationships of exchange under the conditions of socialism: "Equal *right* here is still in principle—*bourgeois right,* although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the

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exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists *on the average* and not in the individual case. In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly stigmatized by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labor they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labor." (Marx: *Critique of the Gotha Program.*)

Let us observe the alienating effect of the universal equivalent, first in a very simple, trivial case, in connection with the phenomena of fashion. People endowed with individual, natural capabilities do not enter into direct human relationships with each other, they do not like or dislike each other on the basis of special individual qualities, but because they dress in accordance with the dictates of fashion in certain generally attractive "equivalents". Fashionable clothes are called for also because they give their wearers a market value and because in them individual capabilities are pressed into the form of a generally accepted equivalent. It is the same with cars, refrigerators or some fashionable luxury articles. The acquisition of these goods becomes important not only because they make life easier, relieve the owner of household chores and help him to achieve a fuller life, but also because their possession means an increase of prestige.

In these cases, in addition to the real need the alienated need appears too and transforms the real one, so that when the two are interwoven the latter is difficult to recognize. The refrigerator is in fact an important requirement of the modern household. But its use for prestige purposes is the source of an alienated passion: competition with the neighbors and a chase after social significance, not the satisfaction of an individual, personal need. We are not faced here with a pure form of alienation, and this may account for its more modest role. But that it is present as a factor, is beyond doubt. Although these tendencies are not unknown under capitalism, it is easy to recognize the difference. First, prestige consumption is there a question of existence. The American sociologist Vance Packard wrote that when the manager of a great bank did not buy the type of car that was then "current"—he did not happen to like it—this caused distrust towards his stocks; it was suspected that bad business caused him to purchase the cheaper car. (Vance Packard: *The Hidden Persuaders*). But the same applies to white-collar workers and even to categories of lower employees.

Manner of dressing and one's residence are marks of social rank that have the function of indirectly assuring personal advancement and one's livelihood. In socialism these prestige items have lost their significance for one's existence, but their measure of value function remains in private life. With the rise in the standard of living and the general accessibility of these articles the prestige attached to them is diminished, and there is a change even in the attitude according to which one wants to achieve advancement— at least in private life—through them. Therefore, with that development of socialist consciousness and of new moral norms, it will be easy enough to subdue and then to abolish these excesses.

The effect of the role of the universal equivalent on the forms of human intercourse is a more important and more essential phenomenon. In public life too—we often encounter a stock-exchange-like evaluation of people, i.e., a psychology that judges a person according to what his capabilities are "worth" in the exchange of public life, how his political views are "rated," whether he is going upwards or downwards—in a word, what can be achieved through him. In this context, the concrete man almost disappears or is only considered to the extent that he is the carrier of political, economic and other values and interests. By way of a joke we may say that man plays here a role similar to that of money: he assumes the dialectic of the universal equivalent; he acquires a *use value* (the political, public or social weight, importance, or influence which happens to be embodied in him and changes all the time). This psychology exists not only in political life, but on the level of separate enterprises and in the professions as well. This is known as "personal connections" or "socialist connections" and presents no small problem. Its liquidation is made difficult because the appearance of being something personal conceals the alienated relationship—the essence of which is not personal friendship or personal attraction, but material interest. These tendencies are not only relics of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ways of living, no mere "vestiges," but consequences of the economic survival of the universal equivalent. All this does not mean that these phenomena are not losing ground or that it is not possible to take up the cudgels against them. In other spheres, too, the economic system of socialism turns people against this tendency. It is also important to note that these phenomena do not simply correspond to the phenomena of alienation noticeable in

capitalism. There the "stock-exchange-like" evaluation of people is the almost exclusive means of social intercourse. Here this is merely a concomitant phenomenon of numerous other, healthier relationships. Moreover, even if the building of personal relationships is only apparent and still includes many alienated traits, its playfulness and occasionally conspicuous "disinterestedness" already serve to disrupt alienation. If for example a customer can buy an "article in short supply" only where he is known, where he has personal connections, then this is not simply a "relationship of interest"—as it would be under capitalism. (The system of "regular customers" is basically a business trick.) Very often this is simply the pious fraud of acquaintanceship, of human conviviality, of giving an advantage to a friend. This weak example is perhaps sufficient to show that such types of alienation are largely self-destroying: they gradually disappear together with the social function in the course of the unfolding of socialism, leaving behind them temporarily no more than their shell. Our assertions apply, of course, only to these secondary phenomena; the primary features of alienation are more tenacious.

Another thread connects greyness of individual life and experiences with this socio-economic source. Consider the experience a good football match furnishes or, on another plane, the shattering effect of witnessing a disaster. And yet most people are not satisfied with processing these experiences for themselves in their own way, with making them part of their own life, or with forgetting them, but are only satisfied when they read about them in the newspaper the next day, when they have seen them in print. The personal experience becomes "authentic" and a part of individual life when it has been given the supposed "key" to evaluation, when it has been formalized in some way.

The same problems, of course, influence private life too. In the education of emotions, as in the formation of aesthetic tastes, the predominance of emotional clichés presents a great problem. Especially in petty-bourgeois strata, but also in intellectual circles and in some strata of the working class, the formalization of emotional experiences survives; some emotions can only be experienced within the framework of hit tunes, books and films, and these people have great difficulty or do not succeed at all in having direct personal experiences. In other words, they approach their own experiences, like those of others, with the eyes of "somebody else".

This is true not only in the domain of love and in the conflicts of family life, but also in other areas of emotional life; this artificial experience operates in cultural life and with regard to moral problems as well; it preserves numerous clichés of taste and attitude, relics that have been emptied of content.

These phenomena—occurring both in politico-economic and in private life—have a common center: the fetishization of certain forms and clichés, resulting relegation into the background of man's individual and personal qualities, ambitions and problems. The given formula plays the part of a general cure, and the individual peculiarities of the "case"—even if they happen to be one's own—are difficult to consider. Let us mention here, by way of example, the formulae of the language of functionaries. They say, "We sit down and discuss the problems," but such a discussion very often does not endeavor to explore the special features of the problem and to search for the particular paths leading to a solution, but tries to be a cure in itself. The example is trivial but perhaps throws light on the fact that the fetishized treatment of organizational problems often shows a similar logic, which is of course again and again demolished by the vigor and will of people who are working on it. It is not the organizational forms that are wrong here either, only their fetishized treatment, which imagines them to be effective in themselves—without the people participating and active in them.

Giving free scope to the many-sidedness of personal life, the enrichment of experiences, the shedding of the formalized style of life, work and the practice of leadership are more complicated problems than the above. Their solutions—in my opinion—are to be sought in the same area as the antidotes to the alienating effect of the division of labor: in the broadening of socialist democracy, the evolvement of spontaneous activity, and the radical development of the social activity, power, and interest of man.

This essay cannot pretend to cover all aspects of this problem. We have not touched on a number of well-known questions such as the forms of city life, of estrangement from nature and of solitude. Variations of all of these are to be found in socialist life and call for a separate thorough examination. Neither the perspectives of solutions nor their theoretical conditions are as yet in the stage where anyone could undertake a complete survey. But further discussions can promote not only theoretical clarification but,

what is most important, our struggle for the full development of man, the many-sided evolvement of the forces of socialism.

Just one comment in conclusion. There are many people who regard the concept of alienation disparagingly or with suspicion, as if it were an idea that had somehow got into Marxist theory from German idealism, or as if it were a phenomenon that would be solved by itself or is already solved. It is the author's conviction, on the contrary, that the liquidation of alienation is one of the most fundamental historic missions of socialism, an essential doctrine and requirement of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory. Without the liquidation of alienation it is not possible to realize the society "worthy of man," communism. It may be anticipated that in the peaceful competition of the two systems it will matter very much—and in the near future—which system will be able to create a society free of alienation. And the historical advantages enjoyed by socialism in this respect have to be made use of. The reduction of working hours, a tendency also existing in capitalism, the relegation to the background of the most glaring phenomena of exploitation, at least in the most advanced capitalist countries, turn the workers' attention towards alienation. And if socialism presents the world with the reality of a society free of fetishes and of alienation—of which capitalism is, by its very nature, incapable—this would give socialism a tremendous advantage in the contest of the two systems.

VII.

ALIENATION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

T. I. Oiserman

Among the problems dealt with by philosophers in the last twenty-five years, that of alienation stands out as having attracted major attention. It is well known that the problem is not new: it can be found in the works of the thinkers of the 18th century Enlightenment and of the German romanticists. It is a central problem for classical German philosophy, especially in the writings of Fichte, Hegel and Feuerbach. In their early works (1844-1845) Marx and Engels developed a new, materialistic approach to the problem in connection with the analysis of the origin of private property and the contradictions inherent in a money and business economy.

In spite of the fact, however, that the problem of alienation had occupied such a conspicuous place in the philosophical teachings of the 18th and 19th centuries, some thirty years ago the concept of alienation actually possessed no significant status in philosophical literature. Thus, for instance, we do not find the term "alienation" in R. Eisler's fundamental *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (1927-30). It is even more surprising that this term is given no·philosophical explanation in P. Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* (Paris, 1956). This explanation probably lies in the fact that the concept of alienation does not belong to those traditional philosophic categories with which the compilers of philosophical dictionaries are preoccupied. On the other hand it may also be explained by the fact that alienation is not a universally used term; it has almost no place in neo-positivism or the new realism. But in the teachings of existentialism, neo-Thomist philosophy, modern Protestant theology and in the works of numerous critics of Marxism the problem of alienation clearly takes on prime importance.

What inspired this widespread if not universal concern for the problem? We can of course discern the operation of certain theo-

retical causes, closely linked with the considerable influence the above-mentioned teachings enjoy in the Western world. In our opinion, however, the crux of the matter lies in the fact that the enormous progress of science, technology and industry during the past fifty years has brought about some rather negative and, as many have pointed out, unexpected consequences. As a result, some thinkers began to raise the question whether such progress of science and industry might not lead mankind to a catastrophe. Other philosophers did not confine themselves to posing the problem, but attempted to prove that scientific and technical progress is something which threatens the very existence of mankind. In a sense this thesis was confirmed by the invention and perfection of nuclear weapons. Their sinister destructive force, which indeed endangers the lives of all the people on our planet, began to be regarded by some philosophers as the inevitable result of the growth of human reason, the fatal outcome of scientific and technical progress, and direct evidence of an irremediably tragic aspect of human life. The conception of alienation elaborated by Hegel in *The Philosophy of History* contains already certain conjectures concerning the objective consequences of the fact that the deliberate and useful activity of man becomes separated from his will and consciousness, concerning the contradictory and relative character of progress, and the predominance of the social relationships over the individual. Incomparably sharper and wider are the contradictions of social progress which we witness in our day in such forms as economic crises, wars, and the threat of nuclear weapons. It is evident that all these factors have heightened interest in the problem of alienation, which is now a problem of the contradictions between social progress and the actual content of human behavior.

A considerable number of the Western philosophers who have devoted their efforts to the problem of alienation regard it as an inherent problem of human nature, independent of any historical conditions. From this point of view all objectification, all embodiment of human activity—whether it is material or spiritual—is alienation of human nature, a loss, a deprivation, a denial of oneself, an enslavement of man by what he creates. Thus, for instance, the alienation of labor is regarded not as a consequence of certain historically transient forms of social production, but as

the result of toil as such, irrespective of the historical conditions. The concept of alienation thus becomes central to the sociology of the subject-object relationship: since man himself creates the social conditions of his life, he himself forges the shackles that bind him. It has always been and will always be so. Such is the significance attributed to the sociologically established fact of the alienation of the basic forces of social development from man. This approach reduces the social to the individual, and attempts to discover the source of all social imbalances in individual human existence; and even if no political conclusions are drawn here, it is perfectly obvious that the anticipated future of mankind is viewed quite pessimistically: nothing, no social change, can overcome alienation, self-alienation and the resulting tragic discord of human life.

This negative interpretation of all objectification, all embodiment of human activity, leads some social philosophers to construe the very existence of man in a pessimistic light. The existence of man being regarded essentially as that of an individual, it is identified with alienated life which ceases with death. Death, however, is not a solution of the tragedy of individual existence since it destroys this very existence. From this point of view the self-awareness of an individual is the awareness of alienation; the conception of reality is the apprehension of alienation; and death is the inevitable consequence of alienation. Communication with other people, whatever its form of intensity, does not overcome alienation. On the contrary, it is considered one of its forms. Even the fact that I am conscious of my difference from things that surround me, that is, that I am aware of the fact that I am not a tree, or a cloud, or a mule, is interpreted as the consequence of self-alienation, as life in alienation. Moreover, the very difference between subject and object is usually interpreted as evidence of the primacy and substantiality of alienation.

It is a well known fact that the concept of alienation was of universal significance as presented in Hegel's philosophy. It played the same role in his ontology as did the concept of emanation in the systems of the neo-Platonists. With the help of the concept of alienation the gap between such differing entities as thinking and being, the knower and the known, knowledge and its subject matter, was bridged in Hegel's epistemology. In his philosophy of

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history the concept of alienation served as a basis for his claim that the history of mankind represents a unified process of realizing freedom, and that this process in a sense constitutes the substantial content of mankind. By means of alienation Hegel made an attempt to overcome the infinite contrast between man and God in his philosophy of religion. According to Hegel all development involves genesis, negation and, then, further alienation in the form of negation of negation.

Feuerbach did away with the universal and absolute character of Hegel's concept of alienation and proved that this concept becomes meaningful only in respect to human activity. He was the first to maintain that alienation is a distinctively human reality. That was an outstanding philosophic achievement. We think, however, that contemporary representatives of the philosophy of man have lost touch with what was right in Feuerbach's assertions. Notwithstanding the fact that they follow Feuerbach in emphasizing the human character of alienation, there exists a tendency among them (for instance, among existentialists) to deduce all and every reality, all and every "being" from "human reality." In this approach the whole world surrounding us is transformed into objectification (alienation) of human emotions and feelings principally those of fear, anxiety, despair and others of a negative character. As a consequence of such an anthropomorphizing of all existence the category of alienation becomes the basis of a philosophic system obviously subjectivist in its main bearings. In other words, we are here confronted by something like an anthropological interpretation of Hegel's system, of his doctrine of alienation. Such a conception is the opposite of what was suggested by Feuerbach because it sets forth an idealistic anthropologism in place of the materialistic anthropologism of Feuerbach.

Some critics of Marxism assert that the Marxist approach to alienation is faulty because it treats alienation as a historically transient phenomenon, which can be entirely superseded by the communist transformation of social relations. Moreover, in this case, according to anti-Marxists, the future of mankind must be conceived as entirely devoid of any contradictions, of any vital tension. Criticism of this kind obviously has an untenable basis, for it assumes to begin with that alienation in its nature must somehow be presumed to be insurmountable and permanent. By

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means of a Marxist approach, however, alienation is shown to be a social and economic fact, the origin and development of which are conditioned by objective circumstances. Proponents of a narrow philosophical anthropologism approach alienation as a function of the vital activity of the individual. From the Marxist viewpoint alienation is essentially a certain social relationship; it is therefore a question of alienated social relations, the destruction of which becomes possible and necessary through the development of the productive forces of a communist society. It follows naturally that to overcome alienation, construed in this way, is by no means tantamount to doing away with contradictions, difficulties and tensions of social development. Communism does away only with antagonistic differences connected with private property and with the existence of antagonistic classes, one of which appropriates the labor of others. But under communism, too, so long as humanity exists there will exist contradictions between the new and the old, the subjective and the objective, etc. These contradictions, however, as well as the difficulties encountered by mankind in its subsequent development, cannot be given the name of "alienation." The latter has a definite meaning which is lost if the attempt is made to render it absolute and universal, to stretch it to cover too extensive a range of situations.

When, for instance, a man builds a house for himself, he materializes his activity, transforms it into something that will exist independently of him. But this action in itself, when abstracted from the social conditions in question, is not alienation or alienated labor. Labor is the natural and most important manifestation of human vital activity. Labor has been the most important factor in the humanization of man and in his subsequent development. And man reaches a point where he alienates himself not simply for the reason that he is doing work, but because the work in question is the kind of onerous toil which takes up the greater part of his life, effectively preventing him from developing the various sides of his nature. Alienated labor is an externally imposed necessity and not at all a longing; it is the means to live but not life itself. For the man whose labor is alienated, life begins where work ends. This attitude of a man towards his work as towards something alien, external, forced, is conditioned by certain historically transient factors: the low level of productive forces in

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the society which had brought about private ownership of the means of production, social inequality and exploitation.

When a singer sings she is far from alienating her own essence; on the contrary, she is happily fulfilling it. Of course, it is not only a case of singing or other such artistic activity. As a result of scientific and technical progress and necessary social reforms, all work can partake of the quality of creative activity, and become a source of joy rather than of alienation.

The concept of alienation includes not only the attitude of the person towards his activity, but also his attitude towards the object which represents the product of the activity. During the whole course of the history of mankind alienation has been most evident in the form of alienation of nature on the one hand, and the domination of man by the product of his own labor on the other. From the point of view of the romantic critics of civilization, critics of industrialism and urbanism, man, in changing, transforming nature, alienates it by maiming and polluting it, by depriving it of its primeval beauty. Now there is no denying the fact that industrial production (in forms taken by it in the course of centuries) did bring about unwelcome and undesirable changes in nature. But there is no reason to believe that such rapacious economic patterns represent an absolute law of production. It is alienated labor, not labor as such, which disfigures and pollutes nature. Free labor enriches, ennobles nature, embellishes it. Man is capable of transforming nature in the manner of an artist, but the required condition for this is to do away with alienation.

The fact that the products of labor came to dominate over man is by no means an inevitable result of the fact that it is man who produces them. Nowadays quite a few philosophers, sociologists and writers indulge in disquisitions to the effect that mankind has created monsters which, instead of serving it, have subjected it. Industrialization, automation, and especially thermonuclear weapons, are the concrete instances usually adduced to support this view. Some go even further and claim that by producing new objects men produce also new wants formerly not existent. In this way man becomes more and more dependent on the products of his own labor. The objects created by men are considered to represent a gigantic realm of alienated human essence, which subjugates man and is likely to bring him to a tragic end.

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One cannot gainsay the fact that scientific and technical progress gave rise to such destructive forces as thermonuclear weapons. It is equally clear that needs generated by the progress of industrial production and culture can oppress man, especially if these needs find no reasonable gratification. There is no justification, however, for claiming that this power of things over men is a natural consequence of labor, an unavoidable result of the fact that, being materialized, it acquires a relative independence in the form of things. In a society in which an abundance of material things is operatively available to all, the things will not be able to dominate men. In future society social wealth will not consist of things; it will represent the development of human capabilities, the capabilities of all the members of society. Social welfare is measured in terms of material possessions only in a society in which these possessions are scarce. The development of productive forces as well as a reasonable transformation of social relations will forever put an end to the domination of the product over the producer, whatever its form. This, however, gives no ground for an idyllic picture of man's domination of nature in future society. It goes without saying that man, when he has placed the vast resources of nuclear energy at his disposal, will have to behave accordingly and be fully conscious of the enormous power in his hands. Here again freedom can only be properly understood as cognized and practically mastered necessity.

Marxism finds the source of alienation in alienated labor, the common ground of all other forms of alienation—social, political, and ideological. Alienated labor, at any rate in its developed form, is connected with private ownership of the means of production. In taking this approach, Marxism opposes itself to both Hegel and Feuerbach, and to all those philosophers who consider human nature as such to be the source of alienation. The fact that every human individual has a particular fate of his own, that he is mortal, fears death, and the like—all this from our point of view has nothing to do with the problem of alienation. Does this mean that we attach no importance at all to individual characteristics of man, that we underrate the importance of individual differences, that we "dissolve" the individual in the social? Certainly not. It would be most naive to underestimate the importance of differences of sex and age, to shut one's eyes to the obvious fact that

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these differences are connected with many specific problems. However, it is relevant to remark that these problems are not only individual but also social in their content, for instance, the status of women in society, pre-school education, old age pensions, and the like. The actual human individual is always either a man or a woman, either old or young, etc. If a given woman is a mother that is, of course, significant both to herself and to society. Marriage, family—all social institutions—are inseparable from the characteristics of human nature. Pedagogy and politics take into account the division of society into groups. Medicine and public health would be inconceivable without taking into account differentia of characteristics of individuals. It must be emphasized, however, that so long as social inequality exists, individual peculiarities and differences play a secondary, practically unimportant role. In future society, which will create the conditions necessary for a free and many-sided development of each individual, human peculiarities and differences will become much more important and will be stimulated in their development.

To sum up: we do not refuse to acknowledge the importance of the individual characteristics of man, but we think that such matters are inseparable from the social factors. The individual as a physically separable unit and his personality as a social phenomenon are inextricably interconnected. Nor does this mean that human life is determined, conditioned, by two qualitatively different factors—the individual and the social. Biological and physiological differences among individuals are not the products of social development, but their concrete historical form, their evolution, is determined in the last analysis by the evolution of social production. Thus, for instance, differences of sex have been inherited by mankind from its animal forefathers, but the specific character and form of sexual emotions and relations are the result of social development. It follows from what has been said that the unity of the individual and social factors is a complex interaction, a specific structure, with the social factors as the general groundwork. This explains why alienation, which is a social phenomenon, and has deep economic roots, may have, superficially, the semblance of an essentially individual phenomenon. The fear of death, seen by philosophical anthropology as something not social, but purely biological, has in reality a deep social background,

though, of course, there would be no fear of death if man were not mortal.

Thus, the alienation of human activity and its products, the domination over man exercised by the materialized products of his own activity, the enslavement of men by the objectified conse-quences of their conscious, purposeful activity, the alienation of nature and that of man from man are social, historically-transient, surmountable phenomena. This is the conclusion which emerges from a scientific analysis of the contradictions of social develop-ment, especially as seen in our contemporary period.

VIII.

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